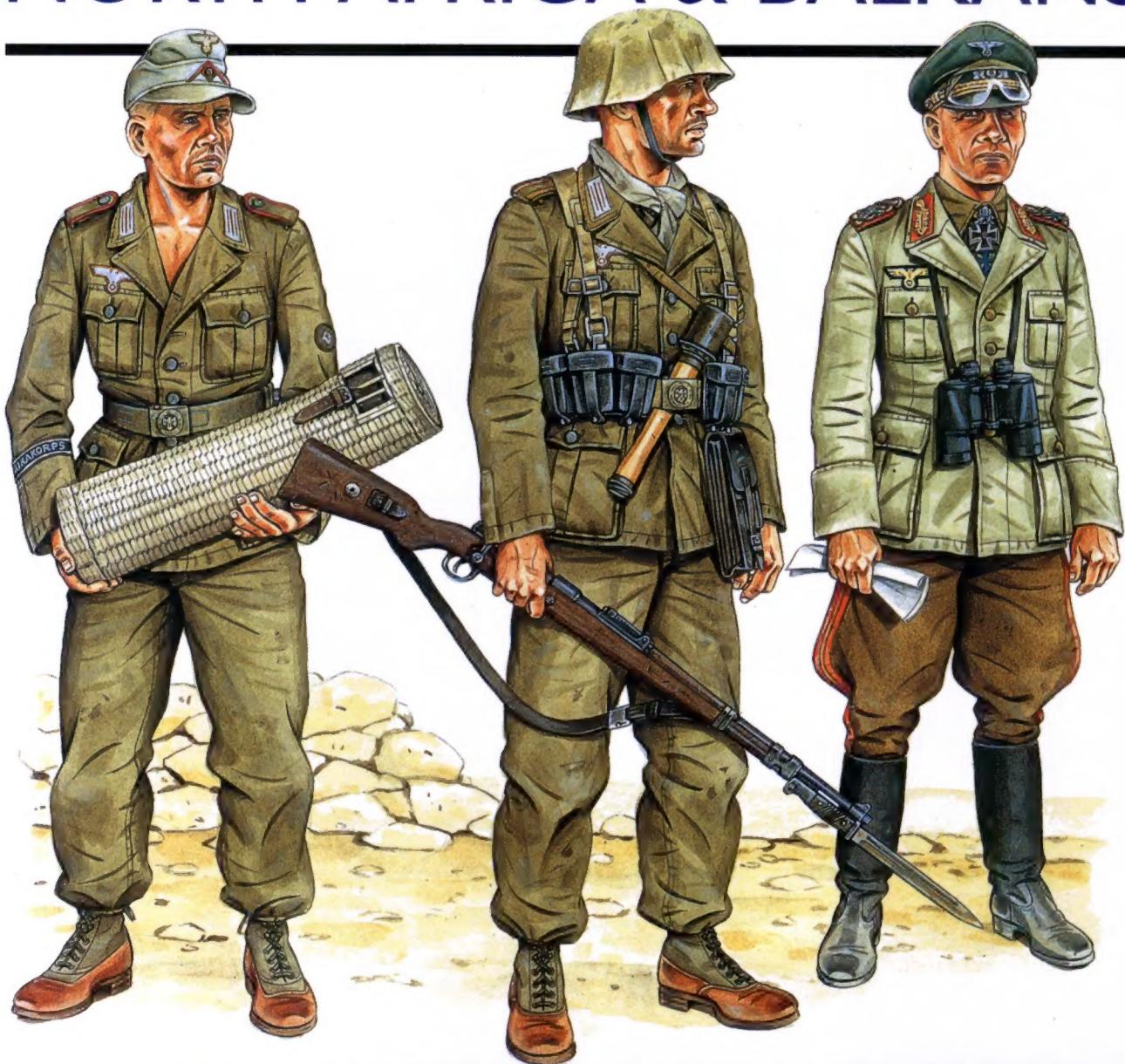


# THE GERMAN ARMY 1939-45 (2)

## NORTH AFRICA & BALKANS



NIGEL THOMAS   STEPHEN ANDREW

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SERIES EDITOR: LEE JOHNSON

OSPREY MILITARY MEN-AT-ARMS 316

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TEXT BY  
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COLOUR PLATES BY  
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## Dedication

This book is respectfully dedicated to my late father, War Substantive Lieutenant William Rowland Thomas, Royal Fusiliers, and the late Oberfeldarzt a.D. Dr. Med. Friedrich Herrmann, formerly of 198. Infanteriedivision and the Bundeswehr – two men from whom I have learnt a lot.

## Publisher's Note

Readers may wish to study this title in conjunction with the following Osprey publications:

MAA 311 *The German Army 1939-45 (1) Blitzkrieg*  
MAA 24 *The Panzer Divisions*  
MAA 34 *The Waffen-SS*  
MAA 124 *German Commanders of WWII*  
MAA 213 *German MP Units*  
MAA 139 *German Airborne Troops*  
MAA 282 *Axis Forces in Yugoslavia*  
Elite 34 *Afrikakorps*  
Elite 63 *German Mountain and Ski Troops 1939-45*

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# GERMAN ARMY 1939-1945 (2)

## NORTH AFRICA & BALKANS

### THE CONTEXT OF THE NORTH AFRICAN AND BALKAN CAMPAIGNS

The Franco-German armistice of 25 June 1940 made Germany master of Western Europe. Hitler first considered an invasion of Great Britain in autumn 1940, then scheduled Operation *Barbarossa*, the conquest of the European part of the Soviet Union, for May 1941. Anxious to emulate Hitler's successes, the Italian dictator Mussolini embarked upon unnecessary military adventures in North Africa and the Balkans, which forced Hitler's intervention, diverting and depleting precious German resources, and a six-week postponement of *Barbarossa*. This contributed to German defeat on the Eastern Front and Germany's collapse in May 1945.

A member of the Africa Corps, in bleached M1940 tropical field cap and M1940 tropical shirt, stencils the Corps tactical sign to a lorry door with white paint.  
(Josef Charita)



#### The Quality of Army Units

On 31 July 1940 Hitler began to prepare for *Barbarossa*. Now the combat area dictated the quality of army divisions that were used: those in North Africa were generally makeshift units, reflecting the low priority of that theatre; the forces committed to Operation *Marita* – the invasion of Yugoslavia and Greece – were front-line divisions earmarked for *Barbarossa*. They were replaced by second-line units with limited mobility and combat potential, first-line units making limited appearances in the Balkans until August 1943 and the arrival of the formidable 2 Panzer Army.

#### The Development of Army Units in North Africa and the Balkans

From 5 October 1941 the Panzer group was upgraded to a Panzer army. Mountain corps were formed after September 1940 and motorised corps were redesignated Panzer corps after June 1942. Reserve corps were formed after September 1942 for reserve divisions of units training in occupied countries.

First-line infantry divisions generally retained their 1939 organisation until 1942, often adding a reinforcement battalion to allocate reinforcements. To raise morale all infantry regiments were redesignated Grenadier regiments on 15 October 1942 and the Rhodes garrison was designated an 'assault' division on 31 May 1943. The 22 Airlanding Division was an infantry

unit with airborne training, while the 'Africa' designation reflected reduced organisation or 'non-standard' personnel – German ex-French foreign legionnaires or 'disciplinary' personnel convicted of petty offences but considered redeemable; they were also used for manning fortress units for static guard duties in Greece. 'Special purpose' (z.b.V.) referred to a staff controlling heterogeneous units.

On 13 April 1941 '700-series' infantry divisions that were only 8,000 strong were formed from second-line troops for occupation duties. There were two infantry regiments, which lacked heavy equipment, an artillery battalion, reconnaissance, engineer and signals companies and minimal logistical support. On 1 April 1943 these divisions, along with light infantry divisions (formed in December 1940 for combat in hilly terrain) and selected reserve divisions, were reorganised as rifle (*Jäger*) divisions with younger personnel and M1939 infantry organisation, but with only two rifle regiments. From 1942 territorial rifle units were gradually redesignated security units.

The most important field unit controlled by Army Intelligence (*Abwehr*) was Brandenburg Commando Regiment 800 (*Lehr-Regiment Brandenburg z.b.V.800*). On 20 November 1942 it was redesignated Special Unit (*Sonderverband*) Brandenburg, with five regiments and a signals and a coastal commando battalion; on 1 April 1943 it was redesignated the *Brandenburg* Division; and on 15 September 1944 it became the *Brandenburg* Mechanised Division.

*Sonderverband* 287 and 288 were mixed regiments of specialist troops originally organised for commando operations in the Persian Gulf, then reassigned for conventional warfare. *Sonderverband* 287, formed on 4

August 1942, fought in the Caucasus with two mechanised battalions, a signals battalion; AT, armoured reconnaissance and engineer companies, assault artillery and rocket projector batteries and a supply unit. From 2 May 1943 it served in Yugoslavia as 92nd Motorised Regiment.

*Sonderverband* 288, formed on 24 July 1941 with a staff (HQ, armoured reconnaissance and Arab companies) and eight independent companies (sabotage, mountain, motorised rifle, MG, AT, AA, engineers and signals), fought in North Africa; it became Mechanised Regiment Africa on 31 October 1942.

The 1941 *Panzer* division organisation differed from that of 1939 by having one *Panzer* regiment and two motorised rifle regiments. By August 1941 all mobile divisions had converted to *Panzer* divisions, and on 5 July 1942 motorised rifle regiments in *Panzer* and light Africa divisions were redesignated mechanised (*Panzergrenadier*) regiments. On 24 March 1943 the motorcycle reconnaissance battalions became armoured reconnaissance battalions with armoured cars, motorcycles and jeeps. Divisional *Füsiliere* battalions were partly bicycle-equipped infantry introduced on 2 October 1943, replacing dis-

**Part of an armoured engineers' section line up for the attack. They are wearing helmets (first issued in late 1941 to front-line troops) with hessian covers held in place by bread-bag straps, M1940 tropical field tunics, tropical breeches and 1st pattern M1940 tropical high-boots. Note the equipment of the machine gunner (right), the hessian bags for grenades and assault equipment, and the spare LMG ammunition boxes. (ECPA)**





**A Lieutenant commanding an assault engineer platoon. Note the MP38/40 canvas ammunition pouches, the M1924 stick-grenades and the MP40 submachine gun slung over the shoulder. The officer has retained M1935 continental officers' field collar-patches and has covered his helmet with a rough hessian cover. (Friedrich Herrmann)**

Troops Command' was established in Tunisia; eventually it comprised one Moroccan, one Algerian and two Tunisian limited combat value battalions with German cadres.

In Yugoslavia three 'Croatian Legion' infantry divisions were formed to fight Tito's Partisans: the 369th 'Devil's Division' on 21 August 1942; 373rd 'Tiger Division' on 6 January 1943; and 392nd 'Blue Division' on 17 August 1943. On 12 September 1941 a force of White Russians, eventually five regiments strong and designated Russian Corps, fought in Serbia. German-Arab Infantry Battalion 845, formed on 5 June 1943 from 3rd Bn Sonderverband 287, served in Greece; and Armenian Infantry Battalion I/125 fought in Albania with 297th Infantry Division.

In September 1943 perhaps the most exotic formation of the Second World War, the 1st Cossack Division, arrived in Croatia with 2nd Panzer Army. Formed in occupied Poland on 4 August 1943 from units who had fought with the Germans on the Eastern Front, it comprised a German cadre commanding two cavalry brigades with two Don, one Siberian, one Kuban and two Terek cavalry regiments, one artillery regiment and divisional support units. Attached to LXIX Corps in eastern Croatia on anti-partisan duties, the division achieved an unenviable reputation among the civilian population.

banded divisional reconnaissance battalions, and 'AA' battalions continued cavalry traditions.

In March 1940 anti-tank assault-gun batteries were formed, and on 10 August 1940 they were grouped into battalions, each with 31 self-propelled guns. Army anti-aircraft artillery battalions were introduced in February 1941, with three batteries of 8.8cm anti-aircraft guns as anti-tank guns.

Supply services were co-ordinated by the divisional supply (*Nachschub*) officer, in October 1942, redesignated the divisional supply commander, controlling the motor-transport and fuel-supply columns (from 25 November 1942 grouped into a motor-transport company), horse-drawn transport columns (from 15 November 1943 grouped into a company), workshop company and supply company (later battalion).

## FOREIGN VOLUNTEERS

The increasing demands on manpower forced the recruitment of foreign nationals.

3rd Bn Sonderverband 287, the German-Arab instruction battalion (*Deutsch-Arabische Lehrabteilung*), was formed on 12 January 1942 and fought in Tunisia. On 22 November 1942 the Vichy-French *Phalange Africaine* (African Phalanx) was formed in Tunisia, and in March 1943 its 220 personnel fought with 334th Infantry Regiment in Tunisia. On 9 January 1943 the 'German-Arab

(*KODAT*), also called the 'Free Arabian Legion',

was established in Tunisia; eventually it comprised one Moroccan, one Algerian and two Tunisian limited combat value battalions with German cadres.

**A Protestant divisional chaplain conducts a graveside funeral service, with Rommel standing behind him. He wears the M1940 tropical field uniform and, as a Protestant, a plain chest-cross. He has no shoulder-boards on his M1940 tropical tunic but has retained continental collar-patches. The pith helmet, of limited value in combat, was more common behind the lines on formal occasions. (ECPA)**

## THE STRATEGY IN NORTH AFRICA

On 13 September 1940 the Italian 10th Army advanced from Cyrenaica (north-east Libya) into Egypt, only to be forced back into Tripolitania (north-west Libya) by the First Offensive from the British imperial garrison. Hitler decided to send a small expeditionary force to bolster Italian forces by blocking the Allied advance and prevent an Italian collapse in Libya.

Encouraged by initial successes, the German commander, *Generalleutnant* Erwin Rommel, dreamed of occupying Egypt and advancing into the Middle East, linking up with a victorious German thrust through Southern Russia into Iraq and Iran, and threatening British India. However, with the steady Allied build-up his forces (four divisions in Libya) made even the official objective unrealistic. Rommel was constrained by permanent shortages of fuel, supplies and reinforcements; much of it had to be brought by sea from Naples to Tripoli, across the western Mediterranean, which was patrolled by British forces.



### The Build-up in North Africa

The contingent which disembarked at Tripoli on 14 February 1941 became the *5. Leichte Division* (5th Mobile Division) on 18 February. It had *Panzerregiment 5* with 120 tanks (instead of 44 in the usual battalion), 3rd Reconnaissance Bn, 39th Anti-Tank Bn, I/75 Artillery Bn (instead of a regiment) and motorised divisional support units – 1/83 Medical Company, 4/572 Field-Hospital, 309th Military Police Troop and 735th Field Post Office, but no engineers or signals. To this were added 2nd and 8th Machine-Gun

battalions in an infantry role, 606th AA Company with 8.8cm anti-aircraft guns, and 606th Anti-Tank Battalion to form a division strong in tanks and anti-tank guns but weak in infantry. In August 1941 it became 21. *Panzerdivision*, with *Panzerregiment 5*, 104th Motorised Rifle (later Mechanised) Regt, 155th Artillery Regt, 15th Motorcycle Reconnaissance Regt and divisional support units (anti-tank bn, engineer bn, signals bn, supply bn, medical company, field hospital, MP troop and field post office). On 19 February 1941 it constituted the first unit of the German Africa Corps – *Deutsches Afrikakorps (DAK)* – under Rommel, officially subordinated to the Italian ‘Armed Forces High Command North Africa’.

On 1 September 1941 the *DAK* – eventually comprising 15th, 21st *Panzer*, 90th Africa and 164th Light Africa Divisions, and one to three Italian corps – became *Panzer Group Africa*; on 30 January 1942 Armoured Army Africa; on 1 October 1942 German-Italian Armoured Army; and on 22 February 1943 1st Italian Army under the Italian General Giovanni Messe. On 14 November 1942 HQ Nehring (Stab Nehring), which on 19 November was redesignated LXXX Corps and on 8 December, 5th Armoured Army, was formed for operations in Tunisia with three German divisions. Combining with 1st Italian army it formed Army Group Africa on 22 February 1943.

### Rommel's First Offensive

On 23 March 1941 Rommel launched his First Offensive with 5th Mobile Division and three Italian divisions, storming El Agheila and advancing through Cyrenaica, before halting on 27 May at Halfaya ('Hellfire') Pass, just inside Egypt.

On 30 April 15. *Panzerdivision* arrived with *Panzerregiment 8*, 15th Motorised Rifle Brigade (104th and 115th regiments), 33rd Field Reinforcement Bn, 33rd Artillery Regt, 33rd Motorised Reconnaissance Bn and divisional support units, plus 15th Motorcycle Reconnaissance Bn and 2nd Machine-Gun Bn, all motorised. By April 1942 15th Motorcycle Recce Bn and 104th Motorised Rifle Regt had left, and 115th Motorised Rifle Regt and 2nd MG Bn had formed 115th Mechanised Regt, joined by 200th Light Infantry (later Mechanised) Regt.

In August 1941 the Africa Special Purpose Division was assigned to Rommel. Formed on 26 June 1941 from 361st Reinforced Infantry Regiment with former foreign legionnaires and 155th Motorised Rifle Regt (both units redesignated Light Infantry in April 1942 and Mechanised in July 1942), the division was renamed the 90th Light Africa Division on 26 November, adding 580th Mixed Recce Company, 361st Artillery Bn, 900th Engineer Bn and 190th Signals Company. In April 1942 it was renamed 90th Light Infantry Division. On 26 July it was



**June 1941. Generalmajor Alfred Gause, just appointed liaison officer to the Italian High Command in North Africa, consults with two Italian officers. He correctly wears general-officers' continental shoulder-boards and collar-patches on his M1940 tropical field tunic, but has unofficially pinned a gold metal breast-eagle to his white tunic. He wears a Knight's Cross. (Friedrich Herrmann)**



An Oberleutnant of an anti-tank battalion – he has retained the 'P' branch symbol – in a M1940 tropical field tunic with unofficial continental M1935 collar-patches and breast-eagle and the 'AFRIKAKORPS' cuff-title. He wears captured British anti-dust-goggles on his M1940 tropical peaked field cap with officers' aluminium pipings. He carries the powerful 10x50 binoculars with the protective lens-lid in place (ECPA)

renamed 90th Africa Division and expanded, adding 200th Mechanised Regt, 190th Artillery Regt, 190th *Panzer* Bn, 90th Armoured Recce Bn, 190th AT Bn plus motorised divisional support units.

### Rommel's Second Offensive

On 18 November 1941 the British 8th Army commenced its Second British 'Crusader' Offensive into Cyrenaica, forcing Rommel back into Tripolitania. He halted at El Agheila on 31 December. There, on 21 January 1942, Rommel launched his Second Offensive, penetrating 250 miles into Egypt before stopping at El Alamein.

In July 1942 the hard-pressed Rommel received reinforcements, when the Crete Fortress Division was flown in and reformed on 15 August as a mechanised unit – 164th Light Africa Division with 125th (in 1943 Mechanised Regt Africa), 382nd and 433rd Mechanised regts, 220th Artillery Regt, 164th Armoured (1943, 220th Motorised) Reconnaissance Bn and motorised divisional support units.

### The Final Retreat Through Libya

On 23 October 1942 a total of 230,000 Allied troops advanced from El Alamein, forcing back

Rommel's 100,000 men (four German and 10 Italian divisions). The German-Italian Armoured Army retreated through Libya, eventually halting on the Mareth Line, 100 miles inside Tunisia, on 15 February 1943. On 19 February Rommel routed US Army forces at the Kassarine Pass before handing over to Generaloberst von Arnim and returning to Germany.

### The End in Tunisia

On 8 November 1942 an Anglo-American expeditionary force landed in Morocco and Algeria. They had advanced to within 50 miles of Tunis when, in late November, the 10. *Panzerdivision* reached Tunis as part of LXXXX Corps (later 5th Armoured Army). This unit had *Panzerregiment* 7, 10th Mechanised Brigade (69th, 86th Mechanised regts), 10th Armoured Recce Bn, 90th Armoured Artillery Regt, 302nd AA Bn and motorised divisional support units. It was joined in late December 1942 by 334th Infantry Division (formed 25 November with 754th and 755th Grenadier regts, 756th Mountain Regt, 334th Artillery Regt and divisional support units). Then, in late March 1943, 999th Africa Division arrived. Originally formed as a brigade on 6 October 1942 and expanded to a division on 2 February 1943, this unique formation, with all its sub-units carrying the 'black number' 999, was composed of disciplinary troops led by regular officers and NCOs. Organised as an infantry unit, the division comprised 961st-963rd Africa Rifle regts, 999th Artillery Regt, 999th Armoured Reconnaissance Bn and divisional support units.

5th Armoured Army also included the 21. *Panzerdivision* transferred

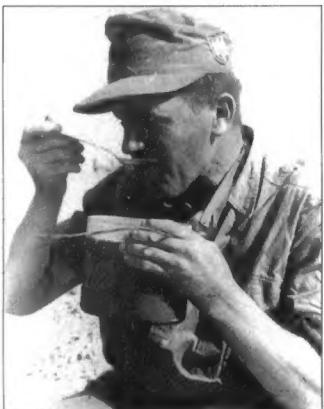
from the DAK, the scratch 'Manteuffel' mixed division, two *Luftwaffe* anti-aircraft divisions and other German and Italian units. It broke out of the Tunis bridgehead in November 1942, and by February 1943 had established a 40-mile deep defensive line around Tunis. However, on 20 March the British 8th Army broke through at the Mareth Line, and on 12 May Von Arnim surrendered in Tunis.

## ARMY UNIFORM IN NORTH AFRICA

### Tropical Uniform Production

In July 1940 the Tropical Institute of the University of Hamburg designed a tropical uniform based on items used by German colonial troops until November 1918. By December 1940 the uniforms were in full production, with more than enough supplies to equip the 5th Mobile Division and 15. *Panzerdivision*, who were deployed to Libya from February 1941.

Most items of the M1940 tropical uniform were manufactured in ribbed heavy cotton twill or cotton drill. The prescribed colour was 'light-olive', a greenish sandy brown known as 'khaki' in Great Britain and 'olive-drab' in the United States and contrasting with the plain sandy brown or 'tan' of Navy M1941 and *Luftwaffe* M1941 tropical uniforms. Consistent production of this shade was not achieved until 1941, and in 1940 it could vary from dark-greenish brown through dark brown to sandy brown. The M1940 tropical greatcoat was manufactured in deep chocolate brown wool. Unlike the continental *feldgrau* (greenish-grey)



Perhaps nostalgic for his pith helmet, this Africa Corps soldier eating from his mess-tin has against regulations pinned the pith helmet's *Wehrmacht* eagle badge to his M1940 tropical field cap, which still shows the branch colour facing-cloth chevron ordered removed on 8 September 1942. Such customising was comparatively rare in North Africa. (ECPA)



A mixed police patrol through the bazaar of Derna, Cyrenaica: two German *Feldgendarmerie* NCOs (front and back left) patrol with a Libyan *Zaptié* (front right) and Italian *carabiniere* (back right). The Germans wear M1940 pith-helmets, tropical shirts and shorts and 1st pattern M1940 tropical ankle-boots and the MP duty gorget. (Brian Davis Collection)



**Halfaya Pass, July 1941.** Men of the 1st Battalion, 104th Motorised Rifle Regiment, 15th Panzer Division, parade to receive decorations. Note the M1940 tropical peaked field caps (several already bleached white), tropical shirts and shorts, and the grim-faced informality of the parade, suggesting men who had just fought a hard battle.  
**(Friedrich Herrmann)**

clothing, almost all tropical uniform items were standard issue for officers and men.

The M1940 tropical uniform proved very popular, and in 1943 its wear was extended to the southern European theatre. Army personnel were forbidden to wear *feldgrau* continental, or navy, *Luftwaffe* or Italian tropical uniform items, but shortages of supply, especially in North Africa, and individual preference, particularly among senior officers, subverted this regulation.

## ORDERS OF DRESS

Regulations issued on 28 December 1939 which simplified the orders of dress during wartime also applied to North Africa. The Formal Ceremonial, Informal Ceremonial, Parade, Reporting, Undress and Guard uniforms were abolished, leaving all ranks with four orders of dress: for formal and semi-formal occasions, the Service Uniform or Walking-Out Uniform; for training or barracks duties, the Service Uniform; for combat, the Field Uniform. The Fatigue Uniform for work details was not worn in North Africa.

### Officers' Tropical Service Uniform

This uniform consisted of the tropical pith helmet or peaked field cap, field tunic, shirt, tie, pullover, greatcoat, belt, pistol and holster, and breeches or shorts with high-boots, or long trousers with ankle-boots.

The M1940 standard tropical pith helmet was manufactured in pressed cork covered in light-olive, later tan, canvas with a brown leather chin-strap. A black-white-red diagonally striped national shield was fixed on the right side and a silver-white *Wehrmacht* eagle on the left, in stamped brass (later in stamped aluminium, as ordered in 1934 for the steel helmet). The M1942 tropical pith helmet, in seamless pressed mid-olive felt, introduced in late 1942, did not see service in North Africa. Captured British helmets and French or Dutch helmets commandeered after the 1940 *Blitzkrieg* campaign, were also worn, and the pith helmet was less popular with the troops; they preferred the tropical peaked field cap, but often retained the pith helmet for more formal occasions.

The M1940 standard tropical peaked field cap, introduced in mid 1941, was made of light-olive ribbed heavy cotton twill and styled on the M1930 *feldgrau* mountain cap, but with a longer peak, a false flap and no buttons. Insignia comprised a machine-woven bluish-grey thread eagle

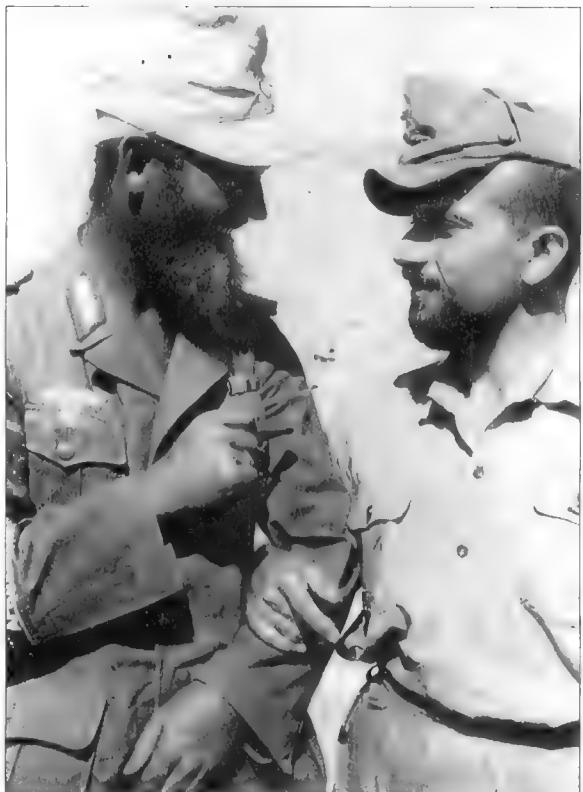
and swastika on a rust-brown shaped backing. Below this was a machine-woven black (outer)-white-red thread national cockade on a rust-brown diamond backing, enclosed by a branch colour facing-cloth chevron, point up (abolished on 8 September 1942). General-officers wore a gold artificial silk chevron. Officers wore a 3mm aluminium (gold for general-officers) cord piping around the crown and on the front scallop of (or right around) the false flap. Some officers unofficially retained the M1935 continental eagle and cockade in bright aluminium or aluminium bullion on bluish dark-green facing-cloth. This cap became the most distinctive and prized uniform item worn by the DAK. Prolonged exposure to the harsh tropical sun bleached it to an off-white colour, and it was worn with pride as the badge of the Africa Corps 'old sweat'.

The M1940 standard tropical field tunic in light-olive ribbed heavy cotton twill was based on the M1933 field tunic for NCOs and men, with plain cuffs, five (sometimes four) light-olive sprayed pebbled front buttons and four patch pockets with scalloped flaps and pleats, but adding an open collar and fashioned lapels. The M1942 tropical field tunic, seen after October 1942, omitted the pocket pleats, while the M1943 tunic, manufactured too late for the North African campaign, had straight pocket flaps and no pleats. Some officers wore privately purchased tunics and a few sported the stylish Italian tan *sahariana* tropical field tunic.

A machine-woven bluish-grey thread eagle and swastika on a rust-brown shaped backing (a larger version of the one on the field cap) was worn above the right breast-pocket of the tunic, with the swastika often overlapping onto the pocket-flap, although many officers unofficially retained the M1935 continental matt aluminium braid breast-eagle with

**December 1941. Exhausted troops of 5th Mobile or 21st Panzer Division, forced back to El Agheila again, manage grim smiles for the camera. They wear bleached M1940 tropical peaked caps or helmets, M1940 tropical field tunics, breeches and 1st pattern M1940 tropical high-boots. The uncomfortable ties have been discarded and sometimes replaced by more practical civilian scarves. (ECPA)**





**A Specialist 2nd Lieutenant – a Sonderführer Z – presumably acting as an Italian interpreter, has an animated conversation with an Italian lieutenant. He wears a bleached M1940 tropical peaked field cap, M1940 tropical field tunic with continental Sonderführer shoulder-straps and collar-patches (introduced 21 March 1940) and wears the 'AFRIKAKORPS' cuff-title.**  
**(Friedrich Herrmann)**

a bluish dark-green facing-cloth backing. Two machine-woven bluish-grey guards' braids, each a rust-brown braid centre-stripe and dividing-stripe, were sewn directly to the collar of the field tunic. Continental field quality shoulder-boards were worn. Many, if not most, officers unofficially adopted the more distinctive M1935 continental bluish dark-green facing-cloth collar-patches with two matt aluminium guards' braids, each with a branch coloured silk embroidered centre-cord.

On the tunic general-officers wore matt gold sprayed buttons and the traditional M1927 continental collar-patches introduced on 1 August 1927. The latter comprised the matt yellow yarn two-leaf *Alt Larisch* design on a bright-red facing-colour patch. Unofficially most also wore a continental bright or matt gold thread breast-eagle on a bluish dark-green facing-cloth backing.

The M1940 standard tropical shirt was manufactured in light-olive cotton drill with four small composite fibre front buttons and two breast-pockets with pleats and scalloped flaps, each secured by a light-olive painted pebbled button. Ex-French Army M1935 khaki tropical shirts, with their distinctive button-down collars and three front buttons, were also worn until the end of

1942. When the shirt was worn as the outer garment, continental field quality shoulder-boards were fixed to the shoulders using detachable light-olive painted pebbled buttons. The M1940 standard tropical tie, also in light-olive cotton drill, was usually discarded on active service and was omitted if the officer wore collar decorations. The M1940 standard olive-brown wool pullover, with a roll-neck or turtle-neck, was worn under the field tunic.

The M1940 standard tropical greatcoat, essential for freezing desert nights, was manufactured in deep chocolate brown wool in the cut of the M1935 *feldgrau* field greatcoat, with two rows of six matt *feldgrau* buttons, a back half-belt secured by two buttons, turn-back cuffs and continental field quality shoulder-boards and a divided back seam. General-officers had matt gold pebbled buttons, leaving the top two buttons open to show bright-red facing-cloth lapel-linings. Other officers entitled to collar decorations also left these buttons open. Officers also wore the leather greatcoat.

The M1940 officers' tropical belt was in heavy olive-green canvas with a circular aluminium buckle painted olive-green featuring an eagle and swastika in an oak-wreath, but most officers chose to retain their brown leather continental belt with an aluminium two-claw open buckle. A P08 Luger, P38 or Walther PPK pistol was usually carried in a brown leather holster.

The M1940 standard tropical breeches were manufactured in light-olive ribbed heavy cotton twill with a concealed integral belt. General-officers retained their traditional 2mm piping down the outer seam, flanked on each side by a 4cm stripe, all in bright-red facing-cloth.

The breeches were worn with M1940 1st pattern standard tropical high-boots in light-olive canvas, with brown leather toe, instep and inner ankle reinforcements, and black laces. These were superseded in mid-1941 by the 2nd pattern, extending the leather instep; and a slightly shorter 3rd pattern, introduced in late 1941, extended the leather toe and the instep. Some senior officers, including Rommel, favoured black leather continental high-boots.

The M1940 standard light-olive ribbed heavy cotton twill tropical long trousers proved more practical than the breeches, and troops often added tapes to allow the trouser-bottoms to be pulled tight over the ankles. General-officers wore bright-red trouser-stripes. The trousers were worn with M1940 1st pattern standard tropical ankle-boots, also in light-olive canvas, with brown leather toe and instep reinforcements and black laces. The 2nd pattern, introduced in late 1942, also extended the leather toe and instep reinforcements.

M1940 standard tropical light-olive ribbed heavy cotton twill shorts could also be worn, either with tropical high-boots or with M1940 light-olive knee-socks and tropical ankle-boots.

#### **Other Ranks' Tropical Service Uniform**

Other ranks (except senior NCOs) omitted the officers' pistol but otherwise wore much the same uniforms as officers; there were slight differences, usually regarding the quality of the insignia. They wore issue uniforms and insignia, and unlike officers enjoyed less latitude in adopting unofficial insignia and retaining continental uniform items and insignia. Rank insignia will be considered separately.

Other ranks wore the same tropical pith helmet, shirt and tie, breeches, trousers, shorts, knee-socks, high-boots and ankle-boots as officers, but they did not wear cord pipings on the M1940 tropical peaked field cap. NCOs wore 9mm wide copper-tan aluminium diamond-pattern collar-braid on the field tunic but none on the tropical greatcoat, which was the same cut as for officers. The other ranks' M1940



**September 1942.**  
*Generalfeldmarschall Rommel's successor as commander of Panzer Army Africa, General der Panzertruppen Georg Stumme, inspects installations in Tobruk harbour. Stumme wears a privately purchased M1940 tropical field tunic and breeches with general-officers' trouser-stripes, and sun-goggles on his continental M1935 service cap. His aides on the right wear M1940 tropical peaked field caps and M1940 tropical field tunics, but the officer far left has shortened his bleached field tunic. (Friedrich Herrmann)*

**23 October 1942, the day of the Allied offensive at El Alamein.**

**Major Briel (left), commanding Panzergrenadierregiment 200 of 90th Africa Division, in a battered helmet and M1940 tropical field tunic with unofficial M1935 officers' continental collar-patches and a German Cross medal talks to fellow officers. His right hand is bandaged. Note the M1940 tropical anklets worn by the middle officer. (Friedrich Herrmann)**

tropical belt was in heavy olive-green or light tan canvas with a square aluminium buckle painted olive-green featuring an eagle and swastika in a ring with the motto 'GOTT MIT UNS' (God is with us) and oak leaves.

#### **Officers' Tropical Walking-Out Uniform**

This uniform consisted of the tropical pith helmet or peaked field cap, field tunic, shirt, tie, greatcoat, and breeches or shorts with high-boots, or long trousers with ankle-boots. It was identical to the Service Uniform, except that no belt, pistol or holster was worn.

For more formal occasions some senior officers preferred a privately tailored uniform, a superior quality field tunic with turn-back cuffs and continental collar-patches and breast-eagles, grey suede gloves, and trousers with black continental leather lace-up shoes. Against regulations, the M1935 saddle-shaped *feldgrau* officers' peaked cap was sometimes worn, and some general-officers had a tropical peaked cap made, with superior quality light-olive cloth replacing the *feldgrau* tricot.

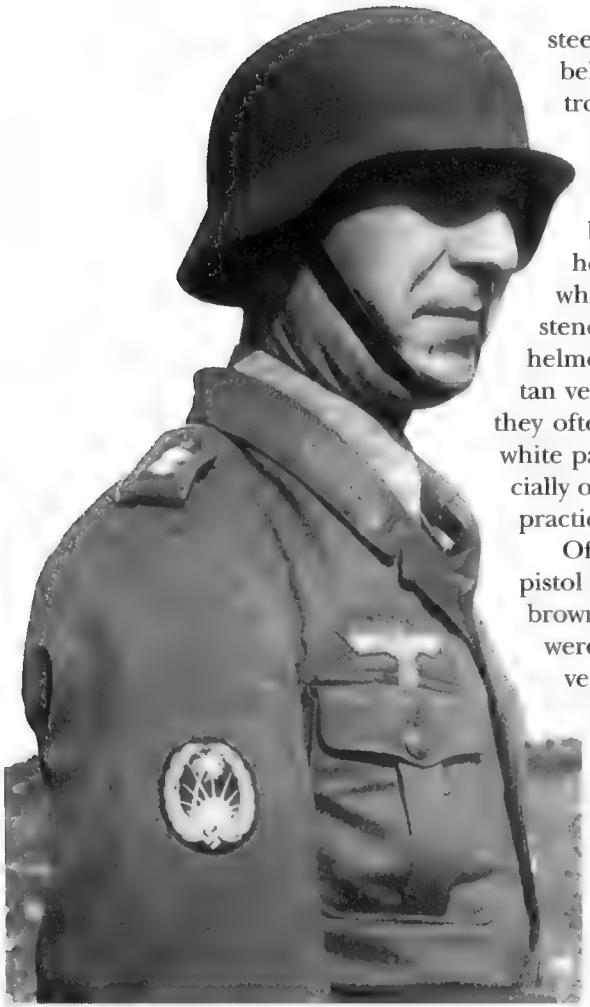


#### **Other Ranks' Tropical Walking-Out Uniform**

Other ranks wore the same uniform as officers with other ranks' insignia, but with the M1940 other ranks' tropical belt and the continental M1936 marksman's lanyard, as modified in 1939. This consisted of a matt aluminium plaited cord with an aluminium *Wehrmacht* eagle above crossed swords on a shield, all in a small wreath, with one to three aluminium acorns (miniature artillery shells for gunners) designating Awards 2-4. Awards 5-8 had a larger wreath; Awards 9-12 had the same badge in gilt. The lanyard was suspended from the right shoulder-strap and hooked to the first tunic button.

#### **Officers' Tropical Field Uniform**

All officers wore the tropical pith helmet or peaked field cap (later the



**Early 1943. A German Oberfeldwebel of Sonderverband 287 on the cadre of an Arab KODAT battalion. He wears an M1935 helmet, M1940 tropical field tunic with copper-tan NCO collar and shoulder-strap braids, bright aluminium rank pips and the Orientkorps arm-badge that was also worn by Sonderverband 288. (Friedrich Herrmann)**

steel helmet), field tunic, shirt, tie, pullover, greatcoat, belt, and breeches or shorts with high-boots, or long trousers with ankle-boots.

Helmets were not general issue in North Africa until early 1943, although mechanised infantry, anti-tank troops and engineers had acquired them by late 1941. The M1935 helmet and the M1942 helmet (introduced on 1 August 1942) had a silver-white *Wehrmacht* eagle on a black shield – usually stencilled – on the left side. Most soldiers painted their helmets roughly with pale yellow, mustard-beige or orange-tan vehicle-camouflage paint, sometimes mixed with sand; they often painted over the shield. The *DAK* vehicle sign, a white palm-tree and swastika, was sometimes painted unofficially on one side of the helmet. Sand-bag hessian provided practical helmet camouflage.

Officers other than infantry platoon-leaders carried a pistol and holster and 6x30 black binoculars in a smooth brown leather or bakelite case. Infantry platoon-leaders were gradually issued equipment in a modified tropical version for North Africa, and often painted metal fittings with sand-yellow camouflage paint. They wore the other ranks' M1940 olive-green canvas belt and M1940 olive-green canvas tropical infantry support Y-straps with *feldgrau* or olive-green painted aluminium fittings supporting two sets of three M1938/40 *feldgrau* canvas ammunition pouches for the MP38 or MP40 sub-machine gun on the front hips. Also worn on the left front hip was the brown or black leather M1935 dispatch-case, the 84/98 bayonet in a black scabbard in a M1940 olive-green or tan canvas tropical bayonet-frog. The M1940

folding entrenching tool was worn on the left back hip, and the M1941 brown or tan canvas tropical bread-bag and two M1931 brown felt-covered canteens with M1940 olive-green or tan tropical canvas straps and aluminium cup were worn on the right back hip. Webbing supported the M1931 mess-tin, which had M1940 olive green tropical canvas straps and a M1931 camouflage shelter-quarter on the upper back. A *feldgrau* canvas strap positioned the anti-gas cape, with a tan-coloured canvas cover strapped to the M1930 or M1938 gas-mask on the lower back. Binoculars, compass, signal whistle and field flashlight were also worn.

All members of armoured and motorised units were issued *Zeiss-Umbral* sun goggles, and some personnel – notably Rommel – sported captured British models.

#### **Other Ranks' Tropical Field Uniform**

Other ranks wore the same uniform as for officers, with other ranks' insignia.

In a ten-man infantry section, the section leader, usually an *Unteroffizier*, wore platoon-leader's equipment. The deputy section-leader and the five riflemen carried standard riflemen's equipment. This con-



Tunisia, January 1943. An Arab soldier of 3rd Battalion, Sonderverband 287, also called the German-Arab Instruction Battalion (DAL), on guard duty. He wears a plain M1935 steel helmet, M1940 tropical field tunic with white branch colour shoulder-straps, and the Free Arabia arm-badge also worn in Greece in 1943 by 845th German-Arab Infantry Battalion. (Brian Davis Collection)

sisted of a tropical belt and tropical Y-straps supporting two sets of three light-brown pebbled leather rifle-ammunition pouches (or, more commonly, continental black pebbled leather pouches, sometimes painted sand-yellow) on the front hips. On the left back hip was the bayonet, scabbard and tropical bayonet-frog and entrenching-tool; on the right back hip the tropical canteen and bread-bag; on the upper back the mess-tin and shelter-quarter; on the lower back the gas-mask; on the upper chest the anti-gas cape. *Zeiss-Umbral* sun-goggles were also widely worn.

The First Gunner – the machine gunner of the three-man light machine gun team – wore the tropical belt, with a P08 Luger or a P-38 pistol in a black holster on his left front hip and a continental black leather spares pouch on his right front hip. The Second Gunner – the replacement machine gunner – wore standard rifleman's equipment, with a pistol and black leather continental holster on his left front hip instead of ammunition pouches, and four 50-round ammunition drums, a 300-round ammunition box, and a sheet-metal barrel protector with one or two spare barrels. The Third Gunner wore standard riflemen's equipment and carried two ammunition boxes.

#### Tank crews' Tropical Uniforms

The M1934 black tank-crew uniform was impractical for North Africa, so tank crews wore the standard M1940 tropical uniform. However, all members of the three *Panzer* regiments – 5th, 7th and 8th, including attached administrative officials (and Assault Gun Battery 287) – pinned aluminium skulls detached from black collar-patches to the lapels of their tropical field tunics.

The M1940 standard tropical tank-crew field cap (effectively the M1940 tropical peaked field cap without the peak) was the same design as the M1934 2nd pattern *feldgrau* other ranks' field cap. Made of light-olive cotton twill it had the same insignia – eagle and swastika, cockade and, until 8 September 1942 a pink (for *Panzer* troops) branch colour facing-cloth chevron, with aluminium cord piping for officers. This cap substituted for the pith-helmet, which was unsuitable for the confines of an armoured vehicle, but it was superseded by the tropical peaked field cap. Some armoured personnel retained the black continental tank crews' M1940 officers' or other ranks' field cap, against regulations.

#### Special Uniforms and Insignia for Other Branches

Cadre officers, NCOs and men of the 999th Africa Division wore standard tropical uniforms and full insignia, but the disciplinary troops omitted all insignia and wore the M1940 other ranks' tropical belt with a plain pebbled disc on the belt buckle.

*Brandenburg* units, reporting to Army Intelligence (*Abwehr*), continued to wear German or foreign uniforms or civilian clothes, depending on their mission.

*Sonderverband* 287 and 288 wore standard tropical uniforms with the appropriate branch colour pipings. Early in 1942 an unofficial bronze version of the *Orientkorps* (Oriental Corps) vehicle-sign was pinned to the left breast-pocket, replaced in late 1942 by a cloth badge worn on the right upper sleeve – a machine-woven yellow rising sun behind a white palm tree, swastika and laurel wreath on a dark bluish-green oval, with a machine-embroidered version on dark bluish-green facing-cloth for the tropical greatcoat.

The two mountain units in North Africa – 756th Mountain Regiment and 2nd Company, *Sonderverband* 288 – both in Tunisia in 1943, wore standard tropical field uniform, often with tropical breeches, continental brown or black leather studded climbing ankle-boots and puttees. Troops carried the standard continental M1931 tropical greenish-khaki canvas mountain rucksack and wore the M1939 mountain cap-badge – a white (later grey) aluminium Edelweiss with a stem, two leaves and gilt (later yellow) stamens on the left side of the tropical peaked field cap, and the M1939 mountain arm-badge – a machine-woven white Edelweiss with yellow stamens and a light-green stem and leaves within a mouse-grey rope wreath on a dark-green (later *feldgrau*) facing-cloth oval, on the right upper sleeve.

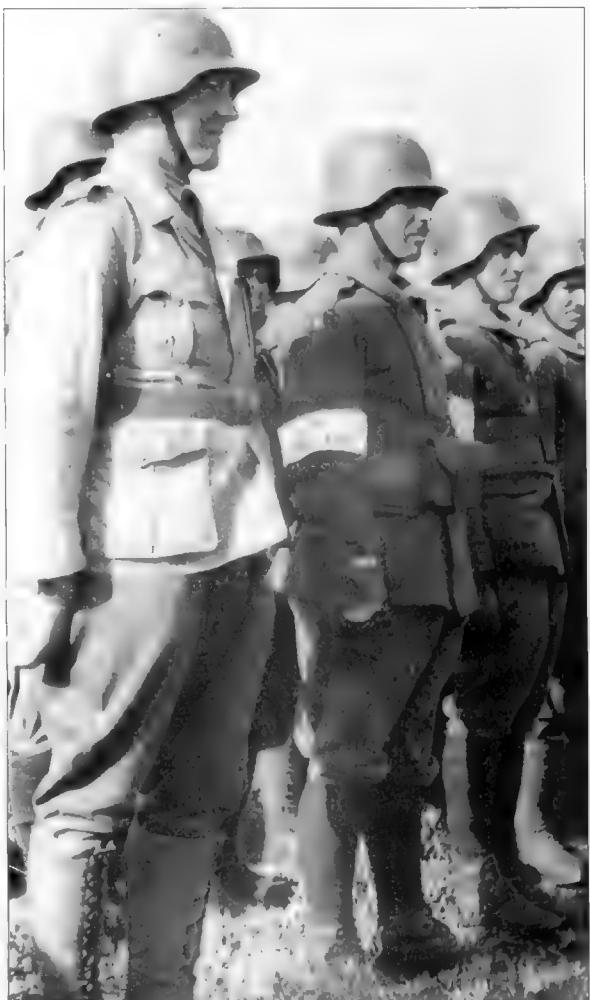
The M1940 tropical motorcyclists' greatcoat was a copy of the M1934 continental rubberised coat manufactured in dark olive tan ribbed heavy cotton twill. It was also worn by vehicle drivers and some officers, who preferred it to the heavier woollen overcoat.

Some personnel of the 33rd Divisional Reconnaissance Battalion, probably only former officers and NCOs of 6th Cavalry Regiment, wore the matt aluminium 'Schwedt Eagle' (also called the 'Dragoon Eagle') 'tradition badge' on the front of the M1940 field cap and peaked field cap.

Assault engineers were issued the M1940 tropical A-frame made of olive-green or tan canvas straps to carry the engineers' assault pack, with the mess tin and shelter-quarter strapped to the upper back, a light-olive canvas equipment bag strapped to each front hip or two light-olive canvas equipment bags hanging around the neck; they carried the bayonet, scabbard and bayonet-frog and entrenching-tool on the left back hip, and one or two water-bottles, the bread-bag and wire-cutters in a black leather case.

Military police wore the normal tropical uniform with continental insignia. This comprised the police arm-badge, a machine-woven or embroidered orange eagle and black swastika in an orange wreath (in hand-embroidered alu-

Tunisia, January 1943. New recruits to an Arab KODAT Battalion on parade, wearing M1935 French Army tunics and leather field equipment, with German helmets and armbands. The German cadre NCO wears regulation M1940 tropical field uniform. (Friedrich Herrmann)





minium thread for officers) on a *feldgrau* backing, often omitted in the field. They had a machine-woven aluminium *Feldgendarmerie* on a brown sleeve-title edged in aluminium yarn (later machine-embroidered in silver-grey yarn) on the left cuff, and, on duty, the matt aluminium gorget. In shirt-sleeve order, only the gorget was worn.

The uniforms and insignia of army officials, including chaplains and *Sonderführer*, will be covered in Volume 3.

## UNIFORMS AND INSIGNIA OF FOREIGN VOLUNTEERS

The German cadre and the Arab personnel of *Sonderverband 287* (including the German-Arab Instruction Battalion) and 845th Infantry Battalion in Greece wore the normal tropical uniform (with infantry white branch colour pipings) with, on the right upper sleeve, a shield featuring a white, red, black and green Iraqi flag with 'Free Arabia' printed in Arabic and German. Arab personnel on labour duties wore a white turban.

Arabs of the *KODAT* battalions wore the French continental M1935 khaki field uniform and brown leather equipment with a German helmet and, on the right upper sleeve, a white armband with '*Im Dienst der deutschen Wehrmacht*' (attached to the German Armed Forces) introduced on 1 October 1941. The *Phalange Africaine* added a French tricolour helmet badge and an axe badge on the right breast-pocket. German tropical uniforms were issued for combat.

Tunisia, April 1943. Mechanised Infantrymen from 15th Panzer Division, probably from the 115th Mechanised Regiment, taken prisoner at the Battle of Gabes Gap. Their expressions at the prospect of captivity vary from relief (third left), through trepidation (right) to dejection (second left). The troops wear M1940 pleated pocket or M1942 pleatless pocket tropical field tunics and M1940 tropical canvas belts and Y-straps. (Brian Davis Collection)

RIGHT Tunisia, April 1943. An officer taken prisoner by British 1st Army at Medjez-el-Bab marches into captivity. He wears the M1940 tropical peaked field cap with the branch colour chevron removed (according to the Order of 8 September 1942). He wears M1935 continental field collar-patches, and the Iron Cross 1st Class and the silver General Assault Badge. (Brian Davis Collection)

## Rank Insignia

For a detailed description of ranks, responsibilities and rank insignia (see MAA 311 *German Army 1939-1945 (1) Blitzkrieg*).

General-officers, field officers, captains and subalterns wore the same field quality rank insignia as on their continental *feldgrau* uniforms on the tropical field tunic, shirt (when in shirt-sleeve order), greatcoat and motorcyclists' greatcoat.

All NCOs and men wore light-olive heavy cotton twill (olive-brown wool on the greatcoat) rounded shoulder-straps, with branch colour piping. NCOs added 9mm copper-tan aluminium diamond-pattern collar-braid with, where appropriate, continental 1.8cm, 2cm or 2.4cm wide bright aluminium pips. A *Hauptfeldwebel/Hauptfeldwebeldiensttuer* wore two tropical NCO braids on the cuff of the field tunic and greatcoat.

Men's rank insignia consisted of arm chevrons made of tropical NCO braid combined, where appropriate, with an embroidered silver-grey or aluminium thread pip, on a light-olive ribbed heavy cotton twill triangle or disc.

On 22 August 1942 new rank insignia was prescribed for the left upper sleeve of the M1940 tropical shirt of officers and NCOs. It consisted of green and golden-yellow insignia on a black rectangle, but its relative unpopularity and supply problems suggest only limited use in North Africa. It will be described in detail in Volume 4.

## Branch Insignia

The German soldier's main branch of service was indicated by a branch colour. Since, with the exception of general-officers, the collar-patches on the tropical uniform did not show the branch colour, branch affiliation was officially restricted to the officers' shoulder-board underlay, other ranks' shoulder-strap piping and, before 8 September 1942, the branch colour facing-cloth chevron on the M1940 peakless and peaked field caps.

M1940 tropical shoulder-straps for junior NCOs and men were manufactured without branch symbols or unit numerals. Officers and senior NCOs removed unit numerals from their shoulder-boards and shoulder-straps but often retained their gold-coloured galvanised, lacquered grey aluminium or zinc alloy branch symbols, such as the gothic 'P' for anti-tank units. Symbols and numerals could be worn when in rear areas or on rare leave-trips to Germany.





**Tunisia, May 1943.** These prisoners of war wear mountain puttees and ankle-boots instead of the unpopular tropical high boots. Note the continental M1935 bluish dark-green facing-cloth shoulder-straps worn by the man first left, and the expressions of grim resignation.  
**(Brian Davis Collection)**

Units in North Africa contained a high percentage of mobile units, so the white branch colour, principally worn by the infantry and therefore the most common colour in Europe, was comparatively rarely encountered.

Motorised rifle regiments, who wore a gothic 'S' symbol, unit numeral and the *Panzer* pink branch colour, were ordered, with effect from 25 September 1939, to drop the 'S' and adopt a grass-green (*wiesengrün*) branch colour. This was retained on 5 July 1942, when motorised rifle and light infantry were redesignated as mechanised regiments.

Individual divisional reconnaissance (*Divisionsfusilier*) battalions derived from former cavalry regiments wore cavalry golden-yellow instead of white.

#### Africa Corps Cuff-Titles

On 18 July 1941 a cuff-title was prescribed for all army personnel with two months service in the DAK, extended on 4 November to all *Panzer* Group Africa personnel. Its wear was confined to North Africa and was rarely worn in the front line; it was permitted on continental uniforms when on leave in Germany. The cuff-title, worn on the right cuff of the tropical field tunic and greatcoat, had a machine-woven white or bright aluminium

'AFRIKAKORPS' on a dark-green cloth background with a machine-woven white or bright aluminium inner border and a light-tan cloth outer border. In spring 1941 a few troops had briefly worn an unofficial version, with a white embroidered 'AFRIKAKORPS' on a black woollen cuff-title, with a white embroidered edging for officers.

The official cuff-title was replaced on 15 January 1943 by the 'AFRIKA' cuff-title, a brown ochre fine wool title with a silver-grey cotton thread 'AFRIKA' flanked by two palm trees and edging worn on the left cuff of all tunics and greatcoats. It was awarded to personnel wounded in North Africa or with six months combat duty there (four with honourable service in April and May 1943 in Tunisia, or three if incapacitated by tropical disease). Only a few troops received the title before the German surrender in Tunis.

## THE STRATEGY IN THE BALKANS

On 28 October 1940 Mussolini invaded Greece from Albania. However, damaging Greek counter-attacks, the British occupation on 31 October of strategically vital Crete (which threatened Rumanian oil-fields that were vital for the German war-machine), the arrival of a 53,000-strong Allied 'W' Force in Greece on 7 March 1941 and a pro-Allied military coup in Yugoslavia on 27 March forced Hitler to activate Operation *Marita* to prevent Greece and Yugoslavia aiding the Allies.

### **The Invasion of Yugoslavia**

German forces comprised 2nd Army (*Generaloberst* von Weichs), with four corps – LI, LII, XXXVI *Panzer*, XXXIX Mountain – and most of 12th Army (*Generalfeldmarschall* List), with five corps – XVIII Mountain, XXXX *Panzer* with XI, XIV *Panzer* and XXXXI Motorised Corps in 1st *Panzer* Group (*Generaloberst* von Kleist). These forces totalled 24 divisions: eight infantry, seven *Panzer*, four mountain, two motorised, one light infantry and two SS motorised, assisted by Italian and Hungarian units.

The invasion commenced on 6 April. The 2nd Army reached Zagreb on 10 April, Belgrade on 12 April, Sarajevo on 16 April and Dubrovnik on 17 April. 1st Panzer Group's XI and XIV *Panzer* Corps captured Niš on 8 April and Belgrade on 12 April, meeting XXXXI Motorised Corps advancing from Rumania. XXXX *Panzer* Corps and elements of XVIII Corps occupied Yugoslav Macedonia, taking Strumica on 6 April, Skopje on 7 April and Monastir on 9 April before pivoting southwards towards Greece.

The 30 Yugoslav divisions were easily defeated by German *Blitzkrieg* tactics. In the north some Slovene and Croatian units refused to fight, but Serbian divisions in the south counterattacked briefly into Italian-held Albania. On 17 April the Yugoslav High Command surrendered, but many troops joined Nationalist Chetnik and later Communist Partisan guerrilla forces.

### **The Invasion of Greece**

The Greek Army comprised 21 divisions in 1st (Epirus) Army, 2nd (Eastern Macedonian) Army and with the troops of 'W' Force.

On 6 April the German 12th Army's XXX Corps advanced into

**Yugoslavia April 1941. Troops manhandle a 37mm anti-tank gun along a country road. They wear M1935 and M1940 field tunics and full field equipment. Note the MP38 submachine gun and the MP38/40 canvas ammunition pouches carried by the Unteroffizier section-leader on the left. (Private Collection)**



western Thrace against Greek 2nd Army, taking Xanthi on 9 April. By 4 May they had occupied the Aegean islands. On 9 April XVIII Mountain Corps stormed the Metaxa Line in Greek Macedonia and advanced through eastern Greece, reaching Larisa on 19 April. XXXX Panzer Corps pushed through western Greece, taking Kozani on 14 April and Ioannina on 20 April, forcing the outflanked Greek 1st Army to surrender on 23 April, then pursuing 'W' Force, taking Lamia on 20 April, Thermopylae on 24 April and Athens on 27 April. On 30 April the Peloponnese were secured and 'W' Force had evacuated to Crete.

The German invasion of Crete – Operation *Merkur* (Mercury) – commenced on 20 May 1941, when the *Luftwaffe* 7th Air Division parachuted onto Crete, and from 22 May 5th Mountain Division and 6th Mountain Division's 141st Mountain Regt were flown in by glider. The 41,500 Allied defenders fought tenaciously, but on 1 June the Germans secured the island.

**Yugoslavia April 1941. A Gefreiter dispatch-rider poses on his motorcycle. He wears the M1935 field tunic with feldgrau M1940 shoulder-straps and M1936 rank-chevrons, and carries a leather dispatch-case. (Private Collection)**

#### **The Occupation of Yugoslavia**

In mid-June 1941, after eight weeks' pacification duties, German 2nd and 12th army divisions transferred to the Eastern Front. Hitler divided Yugoslavia among his Italian, Hungarian and Bulgarian allies, establishing a Serbian government under Commander Serbia in Belgrade, and supporting a Croatian state that covered Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina.



German occupation troops were limited to LXV Corps in Belgrade, redesignated Serbia Command on 1 May 1942, South-East Military Command on 13 August 1943 and finally Army Section Serbia on 26 September 1944, before abolition on 27 October 1944. In October 1942 Croatia Command (on 8 July 1943 redesignated LXIX Reserve Corps and on 20 January 1944 LXIX Corps) co-ordinated German security duties in Croatia and Bosnia, while Syrmia Command, formed January 1944, controlled east Croatia.

During the 39½-month occupation, from mid-June 1941 to 4 October 1944, when the Balkan theatre merged with the Eastern Front, German forces and their Italian, Bulgarian, Croatian and Serbian allies undertook 13 major operations. These were initially against Chetnik and Partisan guerrillas but following the Italian Armistice of 8 September 1943, they were also against Italian and, after the Bulgarian defection of 10 September 1944, Bulgarian forces.

As guerrilla activity intensified, the average number of German divisions increased from four in 1941 to five in 1942, 9½ in 1943 (when four corps of 2nd Panzer Army – XV, XXI Mountain, LXIX Reserve and III SS Panzer – arrived on 8 September 1943 to disarm the Italian Army and oppose an anticipated Allied landing) and 12 in 1944. By 4 October 1944, 24 German divisions had served in Yugoslavia: 13 infantry, one light infantry and two reserve (six reorganised as rifle divisions); three Croatian legion infantry; one mountain; one Cossack; two SS mountain and one SS mechanised.

#### The Occupation of Greece

In mid-June 1941 German 12th Army divisions in Greece transferred to the Eastern Front, leaving most of Greece to Italian control, the Bulgarians in western Thrace and German forces in Athens, eastern Macedonia (with Salonika), the Greco-Turkish border region, western Crete and some islands. 12th Army HQ in Athens (from October 1941 Salonika), also called Commander-in-Chief South-East, under *Generalfeldmarschall* List, controlled XVIII Mountain Corps, with 164th Infantry Division and 125th Independent Infantry Regt in Salonika, 5th Mountain Division on Crete, 6th Mountain Division in Athens and 65th Corps in Serbia and Croatia.

With minimal Greek guerrilla activity in 1941, the Germans concentrated their forces on Crete, withdrawing 5th and 6th Mountain divisions and reorganising 164th and 713rd Infantry divisions as Crete Fortress Division. In August 1942, 22nd Airlanding Division arrived on Crete, allowing Crete Fortress Division to transfer to North Africa.

In 1943 the threats posed by Greek Nationalist EDES and Communist ELAS guerrilla forces, along with the Italian armistice and a possible Allied landing, forced a reorganisation. On 1 January 1943 the 12th Army became Army

**Yugoslavia, April 1941.** Both soldiers wear M1935 field tunics. The *Gefreiter* (left), probably a section-leader (*Gruppenführer*), wears a silver wound-badge (3-4 wounds) and MP38/40 canvas ammunition pouches and carries an MP28/II Schmeisser submachine gun. The *Oberschütze* has M1940 feldgrau shoulder-straps and carries a set of rifle ammunition pouches and an LMG spares pouch. Both have M1924 stick-grenades in their belts. (Private Collection)



Group E, under *Luftwaffe Generaloberst* Löhr (from August 1943 restricted to Greece), reporting to Army Group F in Belgrade, under *Generalfeldmarschall* von Weichs. Athens was garrisoned from January 1943 by 11th *Luftwaffe* Field Division; Rhodes from May by Rhodes Assault Division; eastern Greece and the Peloponnese from June by LXVIII Corps (117 Rifle, 1 *Panzer* divs) and western Greece from September by XXII Mountain Corps (104th Infantry, 1st Mountain divs). From January 1944, 41st Fortress Division, with 22 '999' fortress battalions of disciplinary troops, guarded the Peloponnese, and the Crete garrison was reorganised as 133rd Fortress Division. In August 1944 LXXXI Corps was formed in Salonika, with fortress brigades to supervise Army Group E's retreat into Yugoslavia. This was completed by 2 November 1944, leaving the island garrisons to surrender in May 1945. Elements of the Rhodes Assault Division joined the new *Brandenburg* Mechanised Division in Belgrade on 17 October 1944.

An officer wearing the M1934 old-style field cap, M1935 officers' field tunic showing the officers' collar-patches and a M1940 other ranks' greatcoat with *feldgrau* collar, worn open to display the Knight's Cross. Note the standard 6x30 binoculars. (Friedrich Herrmann)



#### The Occupation of Albania

On 9 September 1943 the 2nd *Panzer* Army's XXI Mountain Corps occupied Albania with 100th Rifle and 297th Infantry divisions, disarming the Italian garrison and attacking Albanian Communist UNCS guerrillas. 100th Rifle Division left in March 1944, and was replaced in June by the Albanian 21st SS Mountain Division. On 29 November XXI Corps evacuated to Yugoslavia.

## ARMY UNIFORM IN THE BALKANS

The April 1941–October 1944 Balkan Campaign overlaps with the campaign on the Eastern Front, to be covered in Volumes 3 and 4. Therefore, only specific Balkans developments will be considered here. Some of the uniform is covered in more detail in Volume 1.

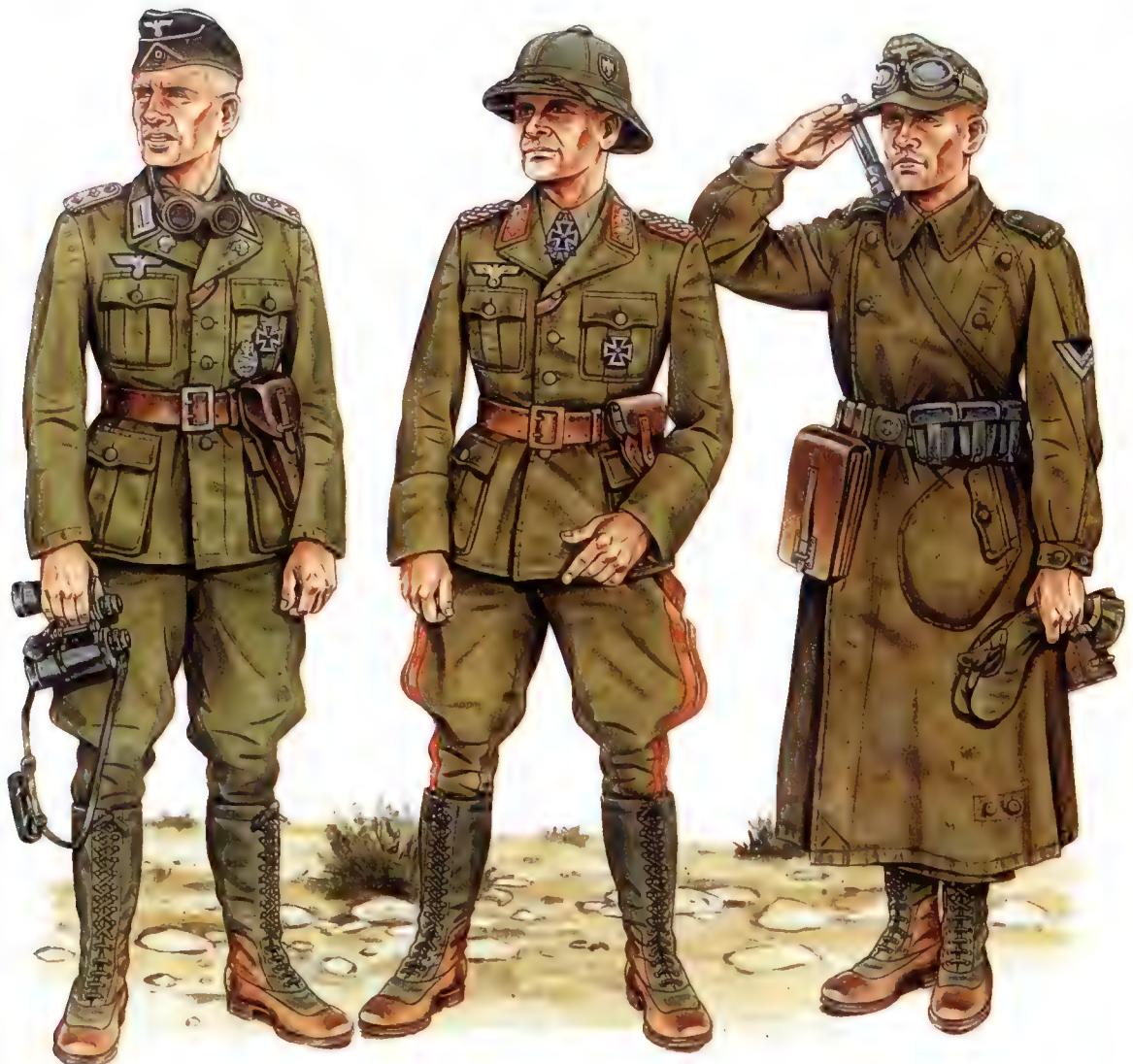
Many troops wore combinations of new and old uniforms and insignia. This was the result of a bewildering succession of regulations and official orders to replace insignia only when worn out combined with supply difficulties – especially to isolated field units – and the soldier's individualism, sentimentality and inclination to retain better quality, more attractive items which suggested long battle experience. Furthermore, uniforms and insignia suffered a progressive deterioration in quality during the war years, and the OKH prescribed ingenious modifications to counteract this inevitable trend and to adapt to conditions unforeseen before 1939.

#### Orders of Dress

Following the regulations of 28 December 1939, Army personnel wore the Service Uniform,

ARRIVAL IN AFRICA, FEBRUARY–APRIL 1941

- 1: Generalmajor, 5. leichte Division, Tripoli, Tripolitania, March 1941
- 2: Hauptmann, Panzerregiment 8, Agedabia, Cyrenaica, April 1941
- 3: Obergefreiter, Kradschützenbataillon 15, Tobruk, Cyrenaica, April 1941



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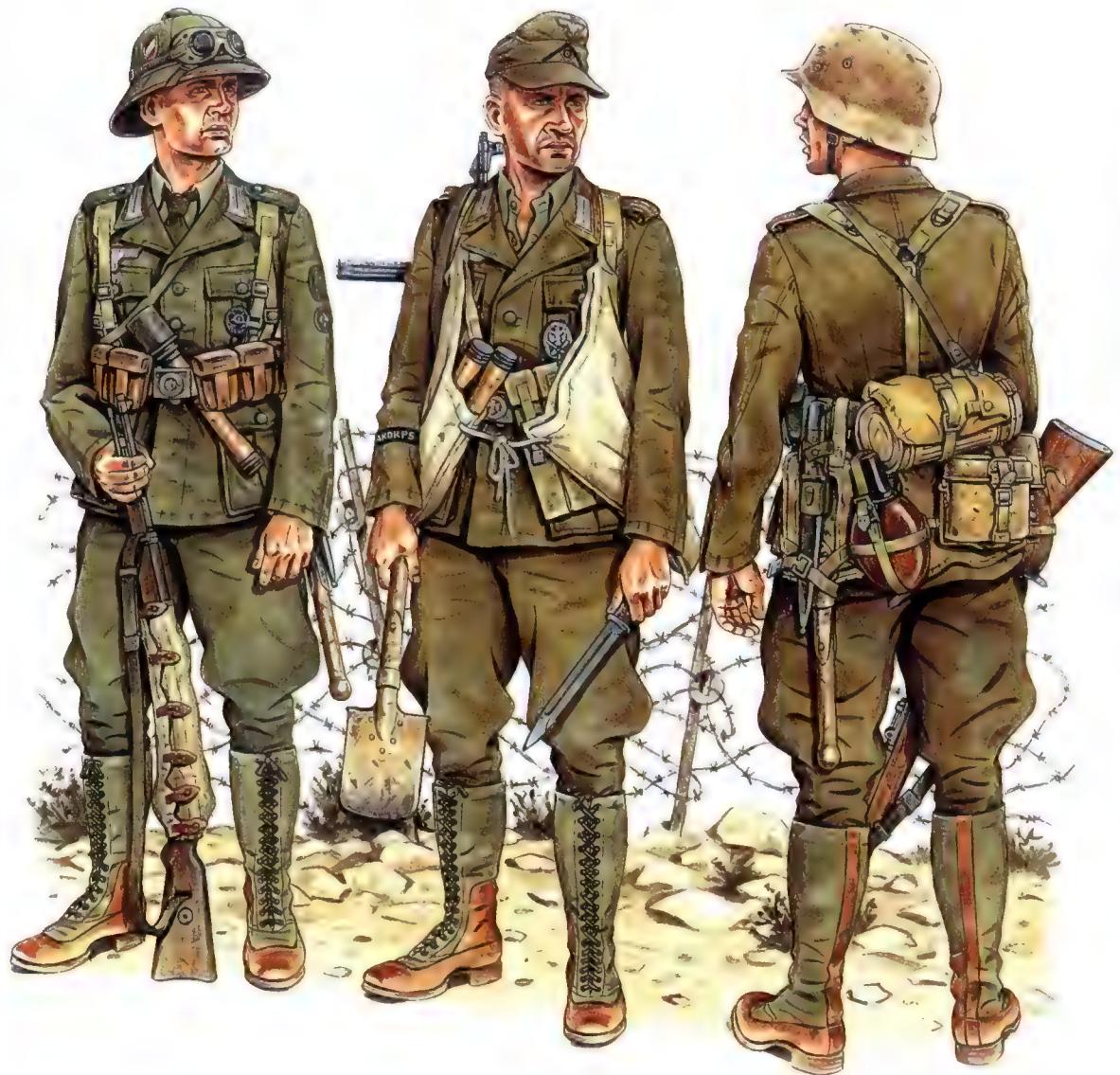
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CYRENAICA AND WESTERN EGYPT, MAY–NOVEMBER 1941

1: Oberschütze, *Maschinengewehrbataillon 2*, Tobruk, Cyrenaica, May 1941  
2: Schütze, *Panzerjägerabteilung 33*, Halfaya Pass, Egypt, May 1941  
3: Unteroffizier, *Pionierbataillon (mot.) 900*, Fort Capuzzo, Cyrenaica, November 1941



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EGYPTIAN FRONTIER BATTLES, NOVEMBER 1941–OCTOBER 1942

1: Leutnant, *Aufklärungsabteilung (mot.) 33*, Gambut, Cyrenaica, November 1941

2: Hauptfeldwebel, *Panzerregiment 5*, Tobruk, Cyrenaica, May 1942

3: Gefreiter, *leichtes Infanteriegeschütz 361*, Bir Hacheim, Cyrenaica, May 1942



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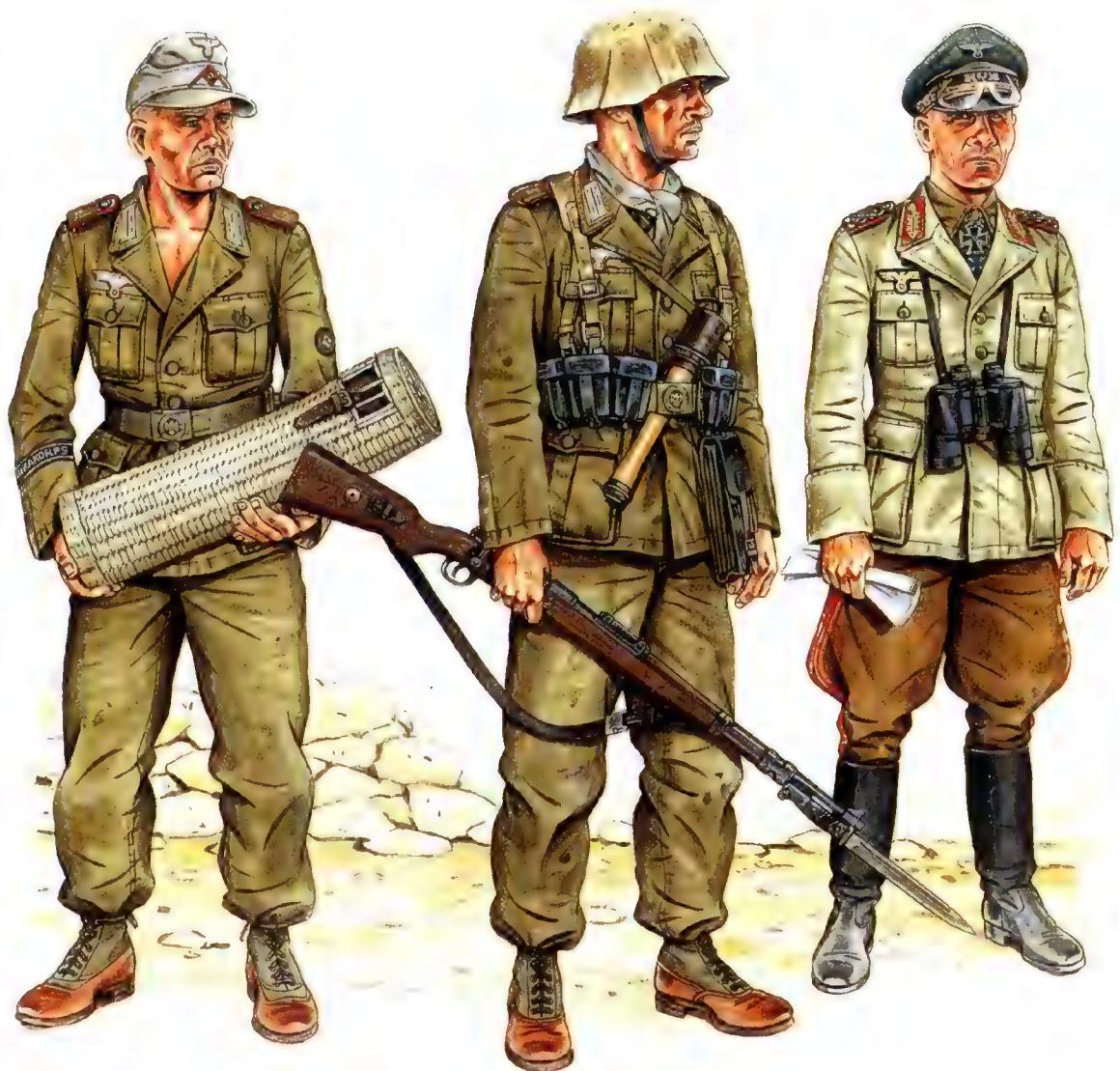
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BATTLE OF EL ALAMEIN, OCTOBER 1942

- 1: Generalfeldmarschall Erwin Rommel, *Deutsch-italienische Panzerarmee*, El Alamein
- 2: Unteroffizier, *Panzergrenadierregiment 115*, Kidney Ridge, Tel el Aqqaqir
- 3: Oberkanonier, *Artillerieregiment 155*, Kidney Ridge, Tel el Aqqaqir



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TUNISIAN CAMPAIGN, JANUARY–MAY 1943

1: Waffenoberfeldwebel, *Panzergrenadierregiment 200*, Kasserine Pass, February 1943

2: Feldwebel, *Gebirgsjägerregiment 756*, Longstop Hill, February 1943

3: Schütze, *Afrika-Schützenregiment 961*, Fondouk, March 1943



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INVASION OF YUGOSLAVIA AND GREECE, APRIL–MAY 1941

1: Feldwebel, *Panzerregiment 33*, Nis, Yugoslavia, April 1941

2: Obergefreiter, *Infanterierregiment 330*, Zagreb, Yugoslavia, April 1941

3: Gefreiter, *Gebirgsjägerregiment 100*, Maleme Airfield, Crete, 21 May 1941



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OCCUPATION OF YUGOSLAVIA, APRIL 1941–OCTOBER 1944

1: Schütze, *Landesschützenbataillon 562*, Belgrade, Serbia, January 1942

2: Oberstleutnant, *Grenadierregiment 370 (kroatisches)*, Gorazde, Eastern Bosnia, May 1943

3: Starshiy Prikasni, *Don-Kosak Reiterregiment 1*, Petrinja, Croatia, May 1944



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OCCUPATION OF GREECE AND ALBANIA, APRIL 1941–NOVEMBER 1944

1: Unterarzt, Sanitätskompanie 1/104, Agrinion, Greece, October 1943

2: Gefreiter, Grenadierregiment 65, Kos, Greece, October 1943

3: Obergefreiter, Grenadierregiment 522, Tirana, Albania, March 1944



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**Yugoslavia, April 1941. An LMG section-team fire their MG34 from a tripod. Note the camouflaged helmet covers.**  
**(Brian Davis Collection)**



**The first gunner of a Section LMG team is carrying his MG34 light machine gun in the approved fashion. He wears the M1935 field tunic with M1938 standard collar-patches and M1940 shoulder-straps. He has draped camouflage netting over his helmet. Note the absence of field equipment or Y-straps.**  
**(Brian Davis Collection)**





A member of the **Feldgendarmerie** on traffic duty brandishing a control baton. He wears the M1934 rubberised field greatcoat for motorcycle crews, the M1935 steel helmet with *feldgrau* woollen toque pulled over his ears, the other ranks' M1935J belt, a P38 hard-shell holster and the MP duty gorget. (Brian Davis Collection)

Walking-Out Uniform, Field Uniform or Fatigue Uniform. The Fatigue Uniform will be considered in Volume 3.

The difficulties of fighting in the hot climate of southern Europe prompted the OKH in 1943 to prescribe the M1940 Tropical Uniform which had proved so successful in North Africa for wear in Yugoslavia, Greece, Albania, Bulgaria and Rumania during the summer months (which were vaguely described as 'the hot season'). This meant that effectively each order of dress had a winter and a summer version, but many personnel wore a combination of continental and tropical uniforms.

#### Officers' Service Uniform

This uniform, which underwent comparatively few changes during the war years, consisted of a service cap, field tunic, field greatcoat, breeches and high-boots, gloves, and a belt with pistol and holster. In summer officers' tropical service dress could be worn.

The M1935 officers' peaked service cap was manufactured in *feldgrau* (greenish-grey) tricot or 'Eskimo' material, with a cap-band in bluish dark-green 'facing-cloth' that was finely woven to give an appearance of a thin felt. There were branch colour facing-cloth pipings, a plain black peak and matt aluminium wire chin-cords. A M1935

bright aluminium eagle and swastika was worn above a stamped bright aluminium national cockade in an oak-leaf wreath.

General-officers had gold-coloured metallic woven cord cap-pipings and gold or yellow artificial 'celleon' wire woven chin-cords, and from 16 November 1942 they had cap-badges in gilded aluminium. However, many generals, against regulations, preferred hand-embroidered bright gold bullion badges on a bluish dark-green facing-cloth backing.

The M1933 officers' field tunic, finally modified in 1935, was manufactured from superior quality *feldgrau* cloth with five matt-grey painted pebbled buttons, four patch pockets, turn-back cuffs and a bluish dark-green facing-cloth collar. All insignia was field quality and consisted of: a M1935 officers' breast-eagle in matt aluminium thread on a bluish dark-green facing-cloth backing; M1935 officers' bluish dark-green facing-cloth collar-patches with hand-embroidered, hand-woven or machine-embroidered matt aluminium guards braids, each with a branch colour silk-embroidered centre cord; and rank insignia on shoulder-boards. General-officers had a dress-quality bright or matt gold thread or golden-yellow 'celleon' hand-embroidered breast-eagle and bright-red facing-cloth collar-patches with the gold two-leaf *Alt-Larisch* design. On 19 July 1940 Hitler revived the *Generalfeldmarschall* rank with an unprecedented promotion of 9 Generals, and from 3 April 1941 a *Generalfeldmarschall* was ordered to wear collar-patches with a bright-gold wire embroidered three-leaf *Alt Larisch* pattern.



**Oberfeldwebel Wriedt, RKT**  
**(Ritterkreuzträger – holder of the**  
**Knight's Cross), talks to admiring**  
**Hitler Youths. He wears the**  
**M1930 mountain field cap with**  
**M1939 Edelweiss cap-badge on**  
**a light-green branch colour**  
**facing-cloth backing favoured by**  
**Austrian mountain troops. He**  
**wears a M1935 field tunic with**  
**M1935 collar-patches with light-**  
**green centre stripes, and M1935**  
**pointed shoulder-straps. He**  
**displays the Knight's Cross, Iron**  
**Cross 1st Class and Infantry**  
**Assault badge. (Brian Davis**  
**Collection)**

Some officers, especially general-officers, retained the six-buttoned M1928 or even the eight-buttoned M1920 service tunic, removing the front piping, or the M1937 officers' piped field tunic with field quality insignia. To counteract the deteriorating quality of the officers' field tunic, the number of front buttons were increased from five to six on 26 May 1941.

The M1935 *feldgrau* officers' field greatcoat had a bluish dark-green facing-cloth collar. General-officers left the top two buttons open to show bright-red facing-cloth lapel-linings. From 9 May 1940 the bluish-dark-green collar was to be manufactured in *feldgrau* uniform cloth, but this order was usually ignored.

The plain stone-grey officers' breeches, with general-officers adding bright-red (staff-officers crimson) facing-cloth pipings and broad stripes, were manufactured in *feldgrau* from 9 May 1940. The black high-boots, usually made of softer leather than riding boots, were retained, as were the grey suede gloves.

The brown leather M1934 officers' belt had a matt aluminium buckle, or matt gilt for generals. On 20 September 1939 the cross-belt was

abolished for all officers below general-officer rank in the field army and from 29 November 1939 for all army officers. Many officers unofficially wore captured enemy officers' brown leather belts.

Officers wearing the Tropical Service Uniform as summer service dress sometimes wore the M1935 service cap and added bluish dark-green collars and M1935 collar-patches and breast-eagles to the M1940 tropical field tunic.

#### **Other Ranks' Service Uniform**

The Service Uniform for technical and senior NCOs and many junior NCOs consisted of the service cap or field cap, field tunic, field greatcoat, trousers and marching-boots, a black belt with pistol and holster, and grey suede gloves. Other junior NCOs and men wore the field cap only, and a bayonet and scabbard instead of the pistol and holster.

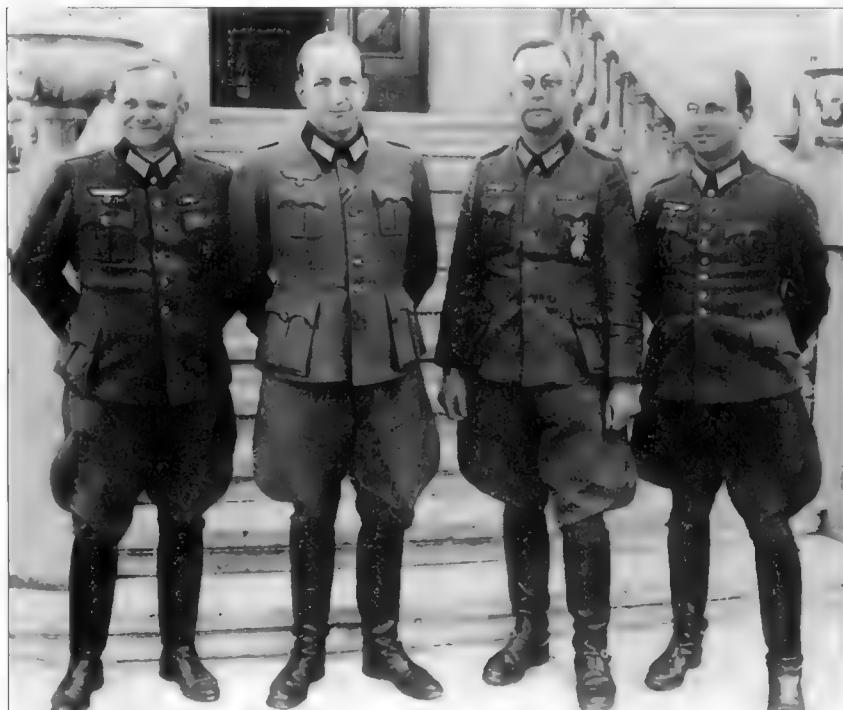
The other ranks' M1935 service peaked cap, in *feldgrau* tricot, had a black patent leather or vulcanised fibre chin-strap. The M1935 other ranks' field cap was manufactured in *feldgrau* cloth with, from 5 February 1939, a silver-grey machine-embroidered eagle and swastika on a bluish dark-green backing and a national cockade on a bluish dark-green rhomboid. Both these were changed on 4 June 1940 to mouse-grey on *feldgrau* backing. The cockade was enclosed by a 4mm woollen branch colour chevron point-up, which was abolished on 7 July 1942. The M1942 other ranks' field cap will be described in Volume 3.

The M1935 other ranks' field tunic, manufactured in *feldgrau* cloth with a bluish dark-green facing-cloth collar and matt-grey painted pebbled buttons, had plain cuffs and other ranks' field quality insignia.

The M1937 silver-grey embroidered breast-eagle had a bluish dark-green backing; on 5 February 1939 the embroidery changed to silver-grey. The bluish dark-green facing-cloth M1938 'standard braid' collar-patches, introduced on 26 November 1938, had two *feldgrau* braid guards braids, each with bluish dark-green braid centre stripes and dividing-stripe. NCOs wore 9mm wide bright aluminium diamond-pattern yarn braid, introduced on 10 September 1935, or silver-grey artificial silk braid, on the front and lower edge of the field tunic collar. The M1935 rounded bluish dark-green facing-cloth shoulder-straps with branch colour facing-cloth piping around the outer edges, worn on the field greatcoat, were adopted for the field tunic on 26 November 1938, replacing the M1935 pointed bluish dark-green facing-cloth shoulder-straps without branch colour piping.

On 25 April 1940 NCO collar and shoulder-strap braid was changed to mouse-grey artificial silk or cellulose-fibre wool. On 9 May 1940 the bluish-dark green facing-cloth collars and shoulder-straps of the M1935 field tunic were replaced by *feldgrau* uniform cloth to form the M1940 field tunic. Also on 9 May 1940, a second pattern 'standard braid' collar-patch was introduced, this was made up of two *feldgrau* braid guards braids, with mouse-grey braid centre-stripes and dividing-stripe, sewn on to a *feldgrau* uniform cloth patch or, as from 1941, sewn directly on to the collar.

From 4 June 1940 the breast-eagle was manufactured in mouse-grey machine-embroidery on a *feldgrau* uniform cloth backing. These changes, implemented late in 1940, were evident in the Balkans from April 1941. On 26 May 1941 the number of front buttons increased to six to compensate for deteriorating quality. The M1942 and M1943 field tunics will be described in Volume 3.



**1942.** Four officers of a divisional staff demonstrate the variations possible with the officers' field tunic. The officer 1st right wears the eight-button modified M1920, the officer 2nd right the five-button M1935, the two on the left the six-button M1941. Note the variations in collar-shape, and the spurs worn by the second right officer. (ECPA)

After 9 May 1940 the bluish dark-green collar of the M1935 other ranks' field greatcoat was manufactured in *fledgrau* uniform cloth, and the plain trousers, designed to be worn with braces, were changed from stone-grey to *fledgrau* cloth. On 26 August 1943 M1943 trousers were introduced with belt-loops, and on 9 November 1939 the black leather marching-boots were shortened to 32-34cm to save material.

The other ranks' M1936 black leather belt had a dull aluminium (smooth sheet steel from about 1941) pebbled buckle with the *Wehrmacht* eagle in a wreath with the 'GOTT MIT UNS' motto. The holster was black leather. The 84/98 service bayonet was carried in a blued steel sheath suspended from the belt by a black leather bayonet-frog.

#### Officers' Walking-Out Uniform

This uniform consisted of the peaked service cap, field tunic, field greatcoat, breeches and high-boots, or long trousers with ankle-boots, and gloves. It was identical to the Service Uniform except that it was worn without a belt, pistol or holster. Many officers wore the M1937 piped field tunic. The trousers were changed from stone-grey to *fledgrau* cloth after 9 May 1940, and then on 26 August 1943 the M1943 trousers were introduced. The ankle-boots were actually black lace-up shoes.

#### Other Ranks' Walking-Out Uniform

Other ranks wore the peaked service cap, field tunic, field greatcoat, long trousers with ankle-boots, black leather belt and the marksman's lanyard. NCOs wore grey suede gloves; junior NCOs and men wore the bayonet, scabbard and bayonet knot. In summer the other ranks' Tropical Walking-Out Uniform was worn.

#### Officers' Field Uniform

In the field all army officers except platoon-leaders wore the standard steel helmet or officers' field cap, field tunic (with the field greatcoat if ordered), brown belt, breeches and riding-boots, grey suede gloves, pistol, holster and 6x30 binoculars.

The M1935 and the M1942 standard steel helmets were painted matt greenish-grey with roughened surfaces following the order of 21 March 1940. They had a silver-white *Wehrmacht* eagle on a black shield on the left side, abolished on 28 August 1943.

The peakless flapped M1938 officers' new-style field cap, was made of *fledgrau* cloth with aluminium thread pipings. An aluminium wire-embroidered national cockade, enclosed by a branch colour facing-cloth chevron, was worn below a machine-woven or hand-embroidered bright aluminium thread eagle on a bluish dark-green facing-cloth backing.



Crete 1941. This colonel commanding the 100th Mountain Regiment, 5th Mountain Division, wears a theatrical aluminium wire cap-eagle on his M1930 *fledgrau* mountain cap and a similar breast-eagle on his M1940 tropical field tunic. Note the unofficial, but universal, M1935 officers' continental collar-patches and the bar to his First World War Iron Cross 1st Class on his left breast-pocket. (Friedrich Herrmann)

General-officers wore gold thread piping and a gold artificial silk chevron; from 16 November 1942 they wore the eagle and swastika and cockade in hand-embroidered gold thread. On 7 July 1942 all officers were required to remove the chevron. The M1943 standard peaked field cap will be described in Volume 4.

The M1934 old-style field cap, officially abolished on 1 April 1942, continued to be manufactured for officers and NCOs after that date. It was actually the officers' service cap without the metal crown stiffener, chin-cords and buttons. It had a soft black patent leather peak and a bright machine-woven aluminium thread eagle and swastika, cockade and wreath, all on a bluish dark-green facing-cloth backing. Some officers unofficially added the service-cap's matt aluminium wire chin-cords.

From 31 October 1939 all officers below general-officer in combat units were ordered to wear the other ranks' field tunic, trousers and marching-boots with the black leather belt, but many officers continued to wear their M1935 field tunic or modified the other ranks' tunic, adding officers' roll-back cuffs, collar-patches and the bluish dark-green officers' collars. In the summer months the officers' tropical field uniform was worn.

Platoon leaders wore the same field equipment as in North Africa, but retained continental items such as the brown or black leather belt, black leather M1939 Y-straps, black leather bayonet frog, M1931 olive-green or tan canvas bread-bag and M1931 canteen; tropical items may have been used in summer.

**Crete, 1941. A German motorcycle combination in tropical summer uniform passes a group of Italian Fascist Youth. The motorcyclists wear sand-camouflaged steel helmets, M1940 tropical shirts and trousers and tropical canvas Y-straps. The vehicle is a Zündapp KS 750cc heavy motorcycle. (Josef Charita)**



### **Other Ranks' Field Uniform**

The field uniform consisted of the helmet or field cap, field tunic, field greatcoat, plain trousers and marching-boots. NCOs had grey suede gloves. Many NCOs wore the M1934 old-style field cap. The M1943 peaked field cap will be described in Volume 4. Other ranks carried the same equipment as in North Africa, but with continental instead of tropical variants. In summer the other ranks' field uniform was worn.

### **Tank Crews' uniforms**

The M1934 special black tank crew uniform (which by May 1940 was also worn by artillery, signals and (until 1941) engineer units in *Panzer* divisions) consisted of the M1940 officers' or other ranks' black peakless field cap, with the branch colour chevron (removed 10 July 1942), the M1934 and M1936 black tank field jacket and trousers, grey shirt, black tie and black lace-up shoes. In summer tank crews wore the M1940 tropical field uniform, sometimes with M1934 black piped pink collar-patches and skulls.

Some general-officers in *Panzer* divisions, corps, groups and armies unofficially wore the black uniform with general-officers' insignia, and many officers continued to wear the M1935 *feldgrau* officers' service cap. The M1943 peaked black field cap will be described in Volume 3. In 1942 the jacket and collar were shortened slightly to save material, and the collar piping was abolished. In 1943 the buttons closing the M1936 jacket were reduced from four to three, and the three left-lapel button-holes to one.

**Yugoslavia, 1942.** Two members of a German tank-crew (top far left and front second left) pose in front of their ex-French Army Hotchkiss H-39 light tank with Chetnik guerrillas with whom they have concluded a local truce and anti-Partisan pact. The crewman at the front wears the standard black uniform but his companion appears to have added a black collar and collar-patches to the M1933 Austrian Army field tunic. Note the bravado of the guerrilla (front far left) as he aims his submachine gun at the cameraman. (Dušan Babac Collection)





An Unteroffizier in an other ranks' M1940 field tunic indicates something to two officers also wearing the same model tunic but with M1935 officers' collar-patches.  
**(Friedrich Herrmann)**

The special *feldgrau* field uniform for armoured reconnaissance, assault artillery, armoured engineers (after 1941) and other units will be described in Volume 3.

#### **Special Uniforms and Insignia for Other Branches**

The Rifle (*Jäger*) Divisions and independent rifle battalions (but not rifle battalions in infantry regiments) – lightly equipped mobile troops organised for hilly terrain not requiring the specialist skills of mountain divisions – were (on 2 October 1942) issued mountain troops' uniforms with the light-green branch colour and M1939 *feldgrau* mountain-trousers, grey ankle-puttees and mountain-boots. Three bright aluminium or dark aluminium zinc oak leaves were worn on the left side of the mountain cap and a machine-embroidered or woven badge with three light-green oak-leaves on a bluish dark-green or *feldgrau* oval edged in green, grey or white rope on the right upper sleeve.

The *Grossdeutschland* Motorised Regiment, fighting in Belgrade in April 1941, adopted (7 October 1940) a new black cloth cuff-title with a hand- or machine-embroidered aluminium thread cursive '*Grossdeutschland*' and edging.

#### **Uniforms and Insignia of Foreign Volunteers**

Personnel of the Croatian Legion divisions wore a straight-sided red and white chequerboard shield stencilled to the left side of the steel helmet, and a machine-woven or machine-embroidered black-edged curved heraldic shield with '*HRVATSKA*' (Croatia) in red (this word was deleted

by German cadre personnel) above a chequerboard, on the left or right upper sleeve of the field tunic and greatcoat. Veterans of the Croatian Legion, formed in July 1941, wore a silver-grey metal laurel linden leaf on the right breast-pocket.

The 1st Cossack Cavalry Division wore German cavalry uniforms with regimental fur caps, reinforced riding-breeches and the *Burka* cloak. On 18 March 1944 the lance-design collar-patches and modified Russian Tsarist rank insignia were replaced by German insignia. The Russian Corps in Serbia wore modified Tsarist Russian uniforms and insignia, changing on 30 November 1942 to German uniforms and insignia without any distinguishing unit badge.

The 845th German-Arab Infantry Battalion wore German uniforms and insignia with the 'Free Arabia' badge of *Sonderverband* 287 on the right upper sleeve. In June 1943 287th Assault Gun Battery, formerly in *Sonderverband* 287, joined 1st Tank Bn, Rhodes Assault Division, its personnel still wearing *Panzer* lapel skulls and the *Orientkorps* arm-badge on their tropical uniforms.

Armenian Infantry Battalion I/125 personnel wore special collar and shoulder-strap insignia (introduced in August 1942 and replaced on 18 March 1944 by German insignia) and a machine-woven or machine-embroidered black-edged curved heraldic shield with '*ARMENIEN*' in golden-yellow or white above red, blue and golden-yellow bars, on the left upper sleeve.

**Yugoslavia, 1942. The four-man crew of a 7.5cm new-style field cannon 16, a revamped First World War model – shell a village suspected of harbouring guerrillas. Note the Unteroffizier gun-commander far left. The men have M1940 field tunics and the minimal field equipment normally worn by artillery crews in combat. (Private Collection)**



## Rank Insignia

General-officers wore dress-quality plaited shoulder-boards with two gold bullion or golden-yellow 'celleon' thread cords and one bright flat aluminium braid central cord on a bright-red branch colour facing-cloth backing. A *Generalfeldmarschall* had silver-crossed marshal's batons; other general-officers had 3-0 German silver or white aluminium plated pips and branch insignia. From 3 April 1941 all three cords of the *Generalfeldmarschall* were in bright gold or golden-yellow 'celleon'.

Field-officers wore two 5mm wide matt aluminium braids on a branch colour facing-cloth backing and 2-0 gold-coloured galvanised or lacquered grey aluminium or zinc alloy pips and branch insignia. Captains and subalterns wore the same insignia on two 7-8mm wide matt aluminium (later *feldgrau* braid) braids placed side-by-side on a branch colour facing-cloth backing.

Senior NCOs wore 3-1 grey aluminium or zinc alloy pips and branch insignia on M1935 bluish dark-green facing-cloth or M1940 *feldgrau* uniform cloth shoulder-straps piped in branch colour facing-cloth and edged on all sides by 9mm wide mouse-grey artificial silk or cellulose-fibre wool diamond-pattern yarn braid. A *Hauptfeldwebel* / *Hauptfeldwebeldiensttuer* wore two NCO braids on the cuff of the field tunic and greatcoat.

Junior NCOs wore the same shoulder-straps and braids as senior NCOs, with the *Unterfeldwebel* wearing braid around the shoulder-strap and the *Unteroffizier* omitting braid across the base of the strap.

Men wore the same shoulder-straps and shoulder-slides as junior NCOs, insignia and M1936 NCO-braid rank chevrons and embroidered silver-grey or aluminium thread pips on a triangular (circular for *Obersoldat*) backing of bluish dark-green facing-cloth (changed on 9 May 1940 to *feldgrau* uniform cloth) and in black cloth for the black tank uniform.

## Branch Insignia

From 1 September 1939 all units of the Field Army (but not the Replacement Army) were ordered, for security reasons, to remove or conceal branch symbols which identified more closely than the branch colour the type of unit, as well as the unit identifying numerals on their shoulder-boards and shoulder-straps. Officers and senior NCOs tended to retain their branch symbols. From 24 January 1940 shoulder-straps for junior NCOs and men were, with the exception of élite formations such as *Großeutschland*, manufactured without branch symbols or unit numerals. Removable *feldgrau* shoulder-slides, with branch colour wool or cotton yarn or flat thin yarn embroidered chain-stitch branch symbols and unit numerals, were issued for wear in rear areas or on leave. Engineers' black and medical corps' dark-blue insignia omitted the former white chain-stitch outline.



Two officers on the Aegean island of Leros, in summer uniform, with M1940 tropical peaked field caps with aluminium officers' piping and the branch colour chevrons removed, M1940 tropical field tunic with unofficial M1935 continental collar-patches and M1940 tropical trousers. (Josef Charita)

RIGHT Yugoslavia, 1942. The crew of a 20mm anti-aircraft gun pose with their weapon. The officer has the M1934 old-style field cap, M1935 field tunic and unidentified light-coloured breeches and high-boots. The 2nd left soldier wears the M1940 greatcoat with M1935 shoulder-straps and carries a field flashlight with clear, red and green lenses. The 2nd right soldier has the M1940 greatcoat with M1935 shoulder-straps. The 1st right soldier has a M1935 greatcoat with bluish dark-green collar. (Private Collection)

**TABLE 1 INSIGNIA OF GERMAN ARMY OFFICER CANDIDATES**

1 SEPTEMBER 1939 – 29 JANUARY 1940

Rank insignia	Function of rank	Rank titles
	Insignia as <u>soldat</u> Accepted for officer-training. Undergoing 4 months basic training as conscript in a Replacement Army Battalion	Fahnenjunker – branches except below Fahnenjunker (im San. Korps) – Medical Corps Fahnenjunker (im Vet. Korps) – Veterinary Corps Fahnenjunker (im Ing. Korps) – Engineer Specialists
	Insignia as <u>Gefreiter</u> plus junior NCO's bayonet-knot Accepted for officer-training. Undergoing 5 months advanced training as conscript in a Replacement Army battalion	Fahnenjunker-Gefreiter – branches except below Fahnenjunker-Gefreiter (im San. Korps) – Medical Corps Fahnenjunker-Gefreiter (im Vet. Korps) – Veterinary Corps Fahnenjunker-Gefreiter (im Ing. Korps) – Engineer specialists
	Insignia as <u>Unteroffizier</u> plus unofficial senior NCO's white metal unit insignia Attending 2 month course at military school ( <i>Kriegsschule</i> )	Fahnenjunker-Unteroffizier – branches except below Fahnenjunker-Oberjäger – Rifles Fahnenjunker-Unteroffizier (im San. Korps) – Medical Corps Fahnenjunker-Unteroffizier (im Vet. Korps) – Veterinary Corps Fahnenjunker-Unteroffizier (im Ing. Korps) – Engineer specialists
	Insignia as <u>Unterfeldwebel</u> plus senior NCO's white metal unit insignia Passed out from military school. Attending 4 month course at Arm of Service school, Medical, Veterinary or Engineering academy	Fähnrich – branches except below Fähnrich (im San. Korps) – Medical Corps Fähnrich (im Vet. Corps) – Veterinary Corps Fähnrich (im Ing. Korps) – Engineer specialists
	Insignia as <u>Oberfeldwebel</u> plus officer's uniform Passed out from Arm of Service school or passed the Final Professional Examination at the Medical, Veterinary or Engineering academy. Serving 2 months in a field unit before promotion to officer	Oberfähnrich – branches except below (no symbol) Unterarzt – Medical Corps (silver aesculapius) Unterveterinär – Veterinary Corps (silver snake) Oberfähnrich (im Ing. Korps) – Engineer specialists (No symbol) Oberfeuerwerker (mit bestandener Offiziersprüfung) – Ordnance (silver cogwheel)



**TABLE 2 INSIGNIA OF GERMAN ARMY OFFICER CANDIDATES**

30 JANUARY 1940 – 9 MAY 1945

Rank insignia	Function of rank	Rank titles
	Insignia as <i>Soldat</i> (20.10.42 double loop). Accepted for officer-training. Completing 4 months basic training in a Replacement Army unit and 1 month with a Field Army unit	Schütze etc (OB) – all branches except below Schütze etc (SOB) – Medical Corps Schütze etc (VOB) – Veterinary Corps
	Insignia as <i>Gefreiter</i> (20.10.42 double loop). Accepted for officer-training. Undergoing 2 months platoon commander training with a field army unit	Gefreiter (OB) – all branches except below Gefreiter (SOB) – Medical Corps Gefreiter (VOB) – Veterinary Corps
	Insignia as <i>Unteroffizier</i> (20.10.42 double loop). Beginning an officer-candidate course, or professional studies at the Medical or Veterinary Academy	Unteroffizier (OA)/Fhj. Unteroffizier – all branches except below Oberjäger (OA)/Fhj. Oberjäger – Rifles Offizieranwärter (W/Fahnenjunker (W)) – Ordnance Corps Fahnenjunker (im San. Korps) – Medical Corps Fahnenjunker (im Vet. Korps) – Veterinary Corps
	Insignia as <i>Feldwebel</i> (20.10.42 double loop). Completing an officer-candidate course before promotion to officer, or after 3 months study at the Medical or Veterinary Academy	Feldwebel (OA) /Fhj. Feldwebel – all branches except below Wachtmeister (OA)/Fhj. Wachtmeister – Cav, Artillery etc Fahnenjunker-Feldwebel (im San. Korps) – Medical Corps Fahnenjunker Feldwebel (im Vet. Korps) – Veterinary Corps Fahnenjunker-Feuerwerker – Ordnance Corps
	Insignia as <i>Oberfeldwebel</i> (20.10.42 double strap loop). Former Oberfeldwebel etc attending an officer-candidate course before promotion to officer	Oberfeldwebel (OA)/Fhj. Oberfeldwebel – all branches except below Oberwachtmeister (OA)/Fhj. Oberwachtmeister – Cav, Artillery etc Fahnenjunker-Oberfeuerwerker – Ordnance Corps
	Insignia as <i>Stabsfeldwebel</i> (20.10.42 double loop). Former Stabsfeldwebel etc attending an officer-candidate course before promotion to officer	Stabsfeldwebel (OA)/Fhj. Stabsfeldwebel – all branches except below Stabswachtmeister (OA)/Fhj. Stabswachtmeister – Cav, Artillery etc Fahnenjunker-Stabsfeuerwerker – Ordnance Corps
	Insignia as <i>Oberfeldwebel plus officer's uniform</i> . Passed the Preliminary Professional Examination at the Medical, Veterinary or Engineering academy. Serving some months in a field unit before resuming studies	Feldunterarzt – Medical Corps (25.7.40) (silver 'A') Feldunterveterinär – Veterinary Corps (6.2.42) (silver 'A') Fahnenjunker-Ingenieur – Engineer specialists (7.11.40) (silver cogwheel)
	Insignia as <i>Oberfeldwebel plus officer's uniform</i> . Passed an Officer-Candidate course, or the Final Professional Examination at the Medical, Veterinary or Engineering academy. Serving 2 months in a field unit before promotion to officer	Oberfähnrich – all branches except below (1.7.43) (no symbol) Unterarzt – Medical Corps (silver aesculapius staff) Unterveternär – Veterinary Corps (silver snake) Oberfähnrich (W) – Ordnance Corps (16.7.43) (no symbol) Feldingenieur – Engineer specialists (7.11.40) (silver cogwheel)

## OTHER INSIGNIA

### Officer and NCO Candidates

Until 29 January 1940 a soldier applying for training as a regular (*aktiv*) officer undertook basic training at a local Replacement Army unit, before attending an all-arms military school – *Kriegsschule* – as a cadet. There he began to wear the branch colour and uniform of his destined branch. A cadet for a combat arm then joined a specialist ‘arm of service’ school – *Waffenschule* – while medical, veterinary or engineering cadets attended a professional academy, then spent a period with a field unit as a Probationary 2nd Lieutenant (*Oberfähnrich*) before being commissioned.

From 30 January 1940 officer training was accelerated and senior NCOs could become officer candidates. A candidate (from 1941 known

as a cadet) moved directly from basic training to a *Waffenschule*, which in 1942 was called an officer candidate school (*Schule für Offizieranwärter*) and on 28 April 1943 became a cadet school (*Schule für Fahnenjunker*) or to an academy before commissioning.

In order to alleviate the shortage of specialist officers in field units, partly qualified medical, engineering and veterinary candidates would interrupt their academy studies for service with a field unit as a field probationary 2nd Lieutenant – *Feldunterarzt* etc. In July 1943 the *Oberfähnrich* rank was restored for combat arms.

The officer candidate ranks and insignia from 1939-40, only slightly different from ordinary NCOs and men, are shown in Fig. 1.

After 30 January 1940 ordinary ranks were introduced, suffixed (OB) – *Offizierbewerber* (officer applicant) for men's ranks and (OA) – *Offizieranwärter* (officer candidate), after 1941, with the cadet – *Fahnenjunker* – prefix for NCO ranks. After 1940 officer candidate insignia was indistinguishable from that of ordinary troops, and so on 20 October 1942 all candidates and cadets added a double loop of NCO braid to their shoulder-straps (see Fig. 2).

NCO candidates (*Unteroffizieranwärter*, on 10 November 1943 redesignated *Unteroffizierbewerber* or NCO applicants) were trained at army NCO schools and wore a single loop of NCO braid on their shoulder-straps.

### Trade Badges

On 22 December 1920 a range of trade badges were introduced for NCOs and men who had passed specialist courses. These technical personnel, corresponding to British technical warrant officers and NCOs, were an essential part of a modern mechanised army.

The trade badge was worn on the right cuff of the field tunic and the greatcoat and consisted of a gothic letter or symbol on a circular cloth badge (from 20 December 1920 in golden-yellow wool or silk or gold wire on *feldgrau* facing-cloth, from 10 September 1935 on bluish dark-green facing-cloth and from 9 May 1940 on *feldgrau* uniform cloth, although on black cloth for the black tank crew jacket). Trade badges for tropical uniforms were in golden-yellow wool on light-olive heavy ribbed cotton twill for the field tunic, and in olive-brown wool for the greatcoat.

The trade badges worn during the Second World War are illustrated in Fig. 3. The regulations of 15 August 1939 prescribed a 3mm bright aluminium hand-embroidered cord inner edging for qualified NCOs occupying a specialist post at regimental or battalion HQ. Qualified NCOs not yet in post, and qualified men in post, wore the badge without the edging. By 1943 many badges were also produced with a 2mm aluminium cord outer edging, as worn by *Luftwaffe* specialists.



**Serbia, spring 1944. A Hauptmann wearing the M1934 old-style officers' field cap and M1935 field greatcoat, carrying issue 6x30 binoculars, with his battalion's senior NCOs. Note the bright aluminium collar and shoulder-strap braid worn by the Feldwebel on his M1940 field tunic with M1935 bluish dark-green shoulder-straps. (Private Collection)**

**TABLE 3 GERMAN ARMY TRADE BADGES 15 AUGUST 1939 – 9 MAY 1945**

Trade	Trade-badge	Ranks	Details of trade
Hufbeschlagpersonal (farrier NCOs & men) Inf, cav, recce, art, terr. rifles, sec, horse transp, med, vet.		Stabsbeschlagmeister, Oberbeschlagmeister, Beschlagmeister; Beschlagschmied... unterwachtmeister/ unteroffizier/ stabsgefreiter/ obergefreiter/ gefreiter/ oberschütze etc/ schütze etc	NCOs run regt & bn smithies assisted by men. 15.8.39: NCOs – edging on badge when in post, none if awaiting posting. Men – no edging
Feuerwerker (Regular Artificer NCOs) Soldaten im Feuerwerkdienst (War Sub. Artificers) Corps of Artificers		(Regular) Stabsfeuerwerker, Oberfeuerwerker, Feuerwerker, Unterfeuerwerker, Feuerwerkerunteroffizier (War Sub. 20.2.40) – Stabswachtmeister/ Oberwachtmeister/ Wachtmeister ('feldwebel')/ Unteroffizier/ Stabsgefreiter/ Obergefreiter/ Gefreiter... im Feuerwerksdienst 31.7.44 – 'wachtmeister' ranks only	Heavy weapons, ammunition & equipment commissioning, inspection & administration at army, corps, div. HQ. 15.8.39: Regulars – edging on badge when in post, none if awaiting posting. 20.2.40: Regulars – edging, War Sub – no edging
Schirrmeister (Regular Technical NCOs) Kriegsschirrmeister (War Sub.Tech. NCOs)		Stabschirrmeister, Oberschirrmeister, Schirrmeister, Schirrunterfeldwebel/ Schirrunnerwachtmeister, Schirrunneroffizier (Ch)-smoke/ anti-gas, (EP)-railw.eng, (F)-Horse trans, (Fz) -Ordn, (K)-Mot, (P)-Eng, (Sch)-Searchlights	Equipment maintenance at Regt, Bn, HQ. 15.8.39: Regulars – edging on badge when in post, none if awaiting posting. 7.8.41: edging for peacetime qualified, none for wartime qualified. 8.7.43: War Sub. – braid bar
Funkunteroffiziere (Signals NCOs) Unteroffiziere im Funkmeisterdienst (War Sub. Signals NCOs) All branches		(Regular) Stabsfunkmeister, Oberfunkmeister, Funkmeister, Funkunterfeldwebel ('wachtmeister'), Funkunteroffizier (War Sub.18.8.43) – Stabsfeldwebel/ Oberfeldwebel/ Feldwebel ('wachtmeister')/ Unteroffizier ... im Funkmeisterdienst	Signals maintenance at Regt, Bn, HQ 15.8.39: Edging on badge when in post, none if awaiting posting 18.8.43: Regular – edging, War Sub. – no edging
Brieftaubenmeister (Pigeon Post NCOs) All branches		Stabsbrieftaubenmeister, Oberbrieftaubenmeister, Brieftaubenmeister, Brieftaubenunterfeldwebel/ Brieftaubenunterwachtmeister, Brieftaubenunteroffizier	Pigeon post duties at Regt & Bn HQ 15.8.39. Edging on badge when in post, none if awaiting posting
Sanitätsunterpersonal (Medical NCOs & Men) Medical Corps		Sanitäts... stabsfeldwebel/ hauptfeldwebel/ oberfeldwebel/ feldwebel/ unteroffizier/ stabsgefreiter/ obergefreiter/ gefreiter/ obersoldat/ soldat	Medically qualified orderly 15.8.39: Edging on badge for NCOs, none for men 31.12.43 edging for all ranks
Waffenunteroffiziere (Regular Armourer NCOs) Waffenmeisterdienst (War Sub.Armourer NCOs) Inf, cav, Panzer, armd inf, recce, AT, art, smoke, eng, signs, MP, terr.rifles, sec		(Regular)Waffenstabsfeldwebel, Waffenoberfeldwebel, Waffenfeldwebel, Waffenunterfeldwebel ('wachtmeister' in cav, recce, art, smoke, signs), Waffenunteroffizier (War Sub.18.12.40) Stabsfeldwebel/ Oberfeldwebel/ Feldwebel/ Unterfeldwebel ('wachtmeister')/ Unteroffizier.im Waffenmeisterdienst	Infantry weapons maintenance at Regt & Bn HQ 15.8.39: edging on badge when in post, none if awaiting posting 18.12.40: Regular – edging, War Sub. – no edging
Wallmeister (Defensive Line NCOs) Engineers		Wallstabsfeldwebel, Walloberfeldwebel, Wallfeldwebel, Wallunterfeldwebel, Wallunteroffizier	Workshop supervisor at Regt & Bn HQ 15.8.39: edging on badge when in post, none if awaiting posting
Festungswerkfeldwebel (Fortifications Sgts) Engineers		Festungswerkstabsfeldwebel, Festungswerkoberfeldwebel, Festungswerkfeldwebel	Fortifications construction at Regt & Bn level 15.8.39: edging on badge when in post, none if awaiting posting
Gasschutzunteroffiziere (Regular anti-Gas NCOs) Uffz. im Gasschutzdienst (War.Sub.anti-Gas NCOs) All branches		(Regular) Stabsfeldwebel, Oberfeldwebel, Feldwebel, Unterfeldwebel ('wachtmeister') Unteroffizier (War Sub.26.2.44) Stabsfeldwebel/ Oberfeldwebel/ Feldwebel/ Unterfeldwebel ('wachtmeister')/ Unteroffizier... im Gasschutzdienst	11.3.41, anti-gas equipment maintenance at Regt & Bn HQ 26.8.43: Regular – edging 26.2.44: War Sub. – no edging (From 25.9.43 GU)
Geräteverwaltungsunter- offiziere (HK/ WG) (NCO Quartermasters) Inf, armd.inf, art		Gerätfeldwebel, Gerätunterfeldwebel, Gerätunteroffizier. ('... wachtmeister' in artillery) + (HK)-garrison, (WG)-weapons & anti-gas	18.11.43. Equipment maintenance at Bn HQ Regular: edging on badge for peacetime qualified, none for wartime qualified
Kraftfahrzeug- und Panzerwärte (Motor & Tank mechanics) Armed and motorised units		These titles were associated with any rank: Kraftfahrzeug/ Panzer... wart II – Mechanic 2 Kraftfahrzeug/ Panzer... wart I – Mechanic 1 Handwerker – Craftsman, Vorhandwerker – Chargehand	1.6.43, for motor and tank maintenance, repair & recovery Mech.2 – no piping; Mech.1 – pink piping; Craftsman silver piping; Chargehand – gold piping
Panzerfunkwärte (Armed signals mechanics) Armoured units		(The title Panzerfunkwart was associated with any rank)	24.1.44 for signals equipment operation & maintenance in armoured units (gold piping)
Nachrichtenmechaniker (Signals mechanics) All branches		(The title Nachrichtenmechaniker was associated with any rank)	10.5.44 for signals equipment mechanics: Edging on badge for NCOs, none for men

**TABLE 4 SELECTIVE LIST OF BRANCH AND UNIT INSIGNIA OF UNITS**
**IN NORTH AFRICA AND THE BALKANS**

14 FEBRUARY 1941 – 4 OCTOBER 1944

Units	Branch colour	Shoulder-strap insignia		Other distinctions (comments)
		Libya, Egypt, Tunisia 14.2.41 – 12.5.43	Yugoslavia, Greece, Albania 6.4.41 – 4.10.44	
<b>Combat Troops – Staff (Kommandobehörde)</b>				
General Officers (Generale)	Bright red	None	None	Larisch patches, red stripes
General Staff (Generalstab) officers	Crimson	None	None	Silver Kolben patches, crimson stripes
3 Army Group (Heeresgruppe) Staffs	White	G (Afrika)	G (E, F)	
2 Army (Armee) Staffs	White	–	A / 2, 12	
3 Armoured Army (Panzerarmee) Staffs	Pink	A / 5, (Afrika)	A / 2	
2 Armoured Group (Panzergruppe) Staffs	White	? (Afrika)	1	
10 Corps (Korps) Staffs	White	LXXXX, (DAK)	XI, XXX, LI-LII, LXV, LXVIII, LXIX, LXXXXI	
1 Reserve (Reservekorps) Staff	White	–	LXIX	
1 Motorised Corps (Korps (mot.)) Staff	White	–	XXXI	
5 Mountain Corps (Gebirgskorps) Staffs	Light green	–	XV, XVIII, XXI-II, XXXIX	Edelweiss badges. Mountain cap
3 Armoured Corps (Panzerkorps) Staffs	Pink	–	XIV, XXXX, XXXXVI	
<b>Combat Troops – Infantry (Infanterie)</b>				
26 Infantry (Infanterie) Division Staffs	White	D / 334	D / 46-718	
1 Air-Landing (Luftlande) Division Staff	White	–	D / 22	
1 Assault (Sturm) Division Staff	White	–	D (Rhodos)	
59 Line Infantry (Infanterie) Regts	White	–	16-750 series	
37 Line Infantry (Grenadier) Regts	White	754-5	359-991 series, (Rhodos)	
2 Machine-gun (Maschinengewehr) Bns	Light green	2, 8	–	
22 Reinforcement (Feldersatz) Bns	White	220, 598-9	83-392 series, (Rhodos)	
2 Africa (Afrika) Division Staffs.	White	D / 90, 999	–	
3 Africa Rifle (Afrika-Schützen) Regts	White	961-3	–	
2 Motorised (Inf.(mot.)) Division Staffs	White	–	D / 16, 60	
3 Motorised (Grenadier (mot.)) Regt.	White	200	120, 156	
2 Motorised (Infanterie (mot.)) Regts	White	–	60, 92	
Motorised Regiment Großdeutschland	White	–	GD monogram	Großdeutschland title
4 Mountain (Gebirgs) Division Staffs	Light green	–	D / 1, 4-6	Edelweiss badges. Mountain cap
9 Mountain (Gebirgs) Regts	Light green	756	13, 85, 91, 98-9, 100, 141, 143,	Edelweiss badges. Mountain cap
3 Mtn Reinforcement (Feldersatz) Bns	Light green	–	91, 94-5	Edelweiss badges. Mountain cap
1 Special purpose (Div.z.b.V.) Div. Staff	White	D (Afrika)	–	
1 Special purpose (Div.z.b.V.) Regt	White	200	–	
3 Fortress (Festung) Division Staffs	White	–	D / 41, 133, (Kreta)	

**TABLE 4 SELECTIVE LIST OF BRANCH AND UNIT INSIGNIA OF UNITS  
IN NORTH AFRICA AND THE BALKANS  
CONTINUED**

Units	Branch colour	Shoulder-strap insignia		Other distinctions (comments)
		Libya, Egypt, Tunisia 14.2.41 – 4.10.44	Yugoslavia, Greece, Albania 6.4.41 – 4.10.44	
3 Fortress ( <i>Festungs</i> ) Bns	White	–	F / 621-3	
22 Fortress Inf. ( <i>Festungs-Infanterie</i> ) Bns	White		F / (I-XIII, XVI, XVIII-XXII), 999	
6 Rifle ( <i>Jäger</i> ) Division Staffs	Light green	–	D / 42, 100, 104, 114, 117-18	Oakleaves badges. Mountain cap
12 Rifle ( <i>Jäger</i> ) Regts	Light green	–	25-750 series	Oakleaves badges. Mountain cap
2 Reserve ( <i>Reserve</i> ) Division Staffs	White	–	D / 173, 187	
5 Reserve Inf. ( <i>Reserve-Grenadier</i> ) Regts	White		17, 45, 130, 231, 462	
2 Anti-Aircraft ( <i>Flak</i> ) Bns	White	F1 / 606	F1/22	
1 Special Unit ( <i>Sonderverband</i> )	Various	288	–	Orientkorps arm-badge
4 'Brandenburg' Commando Bns	Various	II/1, I/4	I/1, I/2	Any appropriate uniform
<b>Combat Troops – Mobile Troops (<i>Schnelle Truppen</i>)</b>				
1 Mobile ( <i>leichte</i> ) Division Staff	Golden yellow	LD / 5	–	
10 Armoured ( <i>Panzer</i> ) Division Staffs	Pink	D / 10, 15, 21	D / 1, 2, 5, 8-9, 11, 14	Skull collar-patches, black uniform
10 Armoured ( <i>Panzer</i> ) Regts	Pink	5, 7, 8	1, 3, 10, 15, 31, 33, 36,	Skull collar-patches, black uniform
6 Motorcycle Recce ( <i>Kradschützen</i> ) Bns	Grass-green	K / 15	K / 2, 8, 55, 59, 64	
1 Motorcycle Recce. ( <i>Kradschützen</i> ) Bn.	Golden-yellow		K / 59	
1 Motorcycle Recce. ( <i>Kradschützen</i> ) Bn.	Pink		K / 61	
8 Armd Recce ( <i>Panzeraufklärung</i> ) Bns.	Pink	A / 3, 10, 90, 164, 220, 999	A / 1, 59	Special collar-patches & uniforms
15 Motor Rifle ( <i>Schützen</i> ) Regts.	Grass-green	104, 115, 155	2, 8, 10-1, 13-4, 28, 110-1, 103, 108, 304	
2 Light Inf ( <i>Leichte Infanterie</i> ) Div. Staffs	Light green	D / 90	D / 101	
2 Light Africa ( <i>Leichte Afrika</i> ) Div. Staffs	Light green	D / 90, 164	–	
2 Light Infantry ( <i>Leichte Infanterie</i> ) Regts.	Light green	200, 361	–	
15 Mechanised ( <i>Panzergrenadier</i> ) Regts.	Grass green	69, 86, 104, 115, 125, 155, 200, 361, 382, 433, (Afrika)	1, 113, 382, 433	
17 Div. Recce ( <i>Divisionsaufklärung</i> ) Bns	Golden-yellow	A / 580	A / 42-392 series	
7 Motorised Recce. ( <i>Aufklärung(mot)</i> ) Bns.	Golden yellow	A / 3	A / 5, 8, 9, 40, 231	
1 Motorised Recce. ( <i>Aufklärung(mot)</i> ) Bn.	Golden yellow	A / 33		Dragoon eagle cap-badge
4 Mtn. Recce ( <i>Gebirgsaufklärung</i> ) Bns.	Golden-yellow	–	A / 54, 94-5, 112	Edelweiss badges. Mountain cap
4 Divisional Recce ( <i>Div.Füsiliere</i> ) Bns	White	–	277, 334, 367, (Rhodos)	

**TABLE 4 SELECTIVE LIST OF BRANCH AND UNIT INSIGNIA OF UNITS  
IN NORTH AFRICA AND THE BALKANS**  
**CONTINUED**

Units	Branch colour	Shoulder-strap insignia		Other distinctions (comments)
		Libya, Egypt, Tunisia 14.2.41 – 12.5.43	Yugoslavia, Greece, Albania 6.4.41 – 4.10.44	
2 Divisional Recce (Div.Füsiler (AA)) Bns	Golden-yellow	–	181, 297	
32 Antitank (Panzerjäger) Bns	Pink	P / 33, 39, 90, 190, 334, 605, 999	P / 52–392 divisional series	
9 Motorised AT (Panzerjäger(mot.)) Bns	Pink	P / 90	P / 4, 37–8, 43, 50, 53, 160, 228	
4 Mtn. Antitank (Gebirgspanzerjäger) Bns	Pink	–	P / 47, 94–5	Edelweiss badges. Mountain cap
<b>Combat Troops – Artillery (Artillerie)</b>				
36 Artillery (Artillerie) Regts	Bright red	33, 75, 155, 220, 334, 999	83–670 divisional series	
5 Artillery (Artillerie) Bns	Bright red	361	653–4, 661, 668, 670	
2 Reserve Arty. (Reserve-Artillerie) Bns	Bright red	–	10, 96	
10 Motorized Arty (Artillerie (mot.)) Regts	Bright red	33, 190	4, 74, 80, 102, 116, 119, 146, 160	
4 Mtn. Artillery (Gebirgsartillerie) Regts	Bright red	–	79, 94–5, 118	Edelweiss badges. Mountain cap
4 Armd. Artillery (Panzerartillerie) Regt	Bright red	33, 90, 155	73	
3 Assault-gun (Sturmgeschütz) Bns	Bright red	–	184, 190–1	Special collar-patches & uniforms
2 Army AA (Heeresflak) Bns	Bright red	Shell / 302	Shell / 299	
1 Rocket Projector (Nebelwerfer) Bn.	Bordeaux Red	9	–	
<b>Combat Troops – Engineers (Pioniere)</b>				
37 Engineer (Pionier) Bns	Black	5, 220, 334, 900, 999	71–704 divisional series	
2 Reserve Engineer (Reserve-Pionier) Bns	Black	–	46, 86	
6 Engineer (Pionier) Cosys	Black	–	704, 713–4, 717–8, (Rhodos)	
4 Mtn. Engineer (Gebirgspionier) Bns	Black	–	54, 91, 94–5,	Edelweiss badges. Mountain cap
10 Armd. Engineer (Panzerpionier) Bns	Black	33, 49, 200, 220	13, 37–8, 59, 86, 89, 209	Skull collar-patches, black uniform
1 Pioneer (Bau) Bn	Light brown	85		
<b>Combat Troops – Signals (Nachrichtentruppe)</b>				
35 Signals (Nachrichten) Bns	Lemon yellow	5, 334, 999	71–392 divisional series	
6 Signals (Nachrichten) Cosys	Lemon yellow	–	704, 713–4, 717–8, (Rhodos)	
1 Reserve Sigs. (Reserve-Nachrichten) Coy	Lemon yellow	–	1087	
4 Mtn Signals (Gebirgsnachrichten) Bns	Lemon yellow	–	54, 91, 94–5	Edelweiss badges. Mountain cap
12 Armd Signals (Panzernachrichten) Bns	Lemon yellow	78, 90, 190, 200, 220	4, 37–8, 77, 84–5, 341	Skull collar-patches, black uniform
3 War Correspondent (Propaganda) Cosys	Yellow/*grey	(Afrika)	698, 690	PK cuff-title. *25.1.43
1 War Correspondent (Propaganda) Bn	Yellow/*grey	–	(Südost)	PK cuff-title.*25.1.43

**TABLE 4 SELECTIVE LIST OF BRANCH AND UNIT INSIGNIA OF UNITS  
IN NORTH AFRICA AND THE BALKANS**  
**CONTINUED**

Units	Branch colour	Shoulder-strap insignia		Other distinctions (comments)
		Libya, Egypt, Tunisia 14.2.41 – 12.5.43	Yugoslavia, Greece, Albania 6.4.41 – 4.10.44	
<b>Supply Troops (Versorgungstruppen)</b>				
29 Div Supply (Nachschubführer) officers	Light blue	D / 5, 190, 220, 334, 999	D / 46–887 divisional series	
4 Mtn Div Supply (Nachschubführer) officers	Light blue	–	D / 54, 91, 94–5	
6 Mot Div Supply (Nachschubführer (mot))	Light blue	–	D / 4, 61, 66, 82, 85, 160	
3 Armd Div Supply (Nachschubführer) officers	Light blue	–	D / 59, 60, 81	
22 Div Supply (Nachschubtruppen) cmdrs	Light blue	D / 33, 90, 200	D / 104–717 divisional series	
2 Div Supply (Nachschub-Kolonnen) Bns	Light blue	D / 5, 334	–	
1 Supply (Nachschub) Bn	Light blue	N / 533	–	
3 Div Supply (Versorgung) Regts	Light blue	–	N / 297, 367, 373	
213 Mot Transport (Kraftwagen) Cosys	Light-blue	N / 33–999 divisional series	N / 4–887 divisional series	
51? Mot Transport (Kraftfahr) Cosys	Light-blue	KF / 33–999 divisional series	KF / 4–887 divisional series	
240? Horse-drawn Transport (Fahr) Cosys	Light-blue	–	4–887 divisional series	Cavalry breeches & boots
35? Horse-drawn Transport (Fahr) Sqdns	Light-blue	–	4–887 divisional series	Cavalry breeches & boots
Medical Corps (Sanitäts) General-Officers	Bright red	Silver aesculapius staff	Silver aesculapius staff	Larisch patches, red trouser-stripes
Medical Corps (Sanitäts) officers	Dark blue	Gold aesculapius staff	Gold aesculapius staff	Red cross armband
35 Horse Med (Sanitäts) Cosys-men	Dark blue	–	46–887 divisional series	Red cross band. Medical badge
4 Mtn Med (Gebirgssanitäts) Cosys-men	Dark blue	–	54, 91, 94–5	Edelweiss & medical badges. Mtn cap
16 Mot. Medical (Sanitäts) Cosys - NCO/men	Dark blue	33–999 divisional series	4–85 divisional series	Red cross band. Medical badge
37 Field Hospitals (Feldlazarette)-men	Dark blue	190, 334, 572	46–887 divisional series	Red cross band. Medical badge
4 Mtn Hosp (Geb.Feldlazarette) – NCO & men	Dark blue	–	54, 91, 94–5	Edelweiss & medical badges. Mtn cap
11 Mot Hosp (Feldlazarette (mot)) – NCO/men	Dark blue	33, 200	4, 59, 60–1, 66, 81–2, 85, 160	Red cross band; medical badge
Veterinary Corps (Veterinär) Generals	Bright red	Silver snake	Silver snake	Larisch patches, red trouser-stripes
Veterinary Corps (Veterinär) officers	Crimson	Gold snake	Gold snake	Cavalry breeches & boots
37 Veterinary (Veterinär) Cosys – NCO & men	Crimson	334, 999	46–887 divisional series	Cavalry breeches & boots
4 M.P. (Feldgendarmerie) Bns	Orange	613	501, 591, 696	Sleeve-badge & cuff-title

**TABLE 4 SELECTIVE LIST OF BRANCH AND UNIT INSIGNIA OF UNITS  
IN NORTH AFRICA AND THE BALKANS**

CONTINUED

Units	Branch colour	Shoulder-strap insignia		Other distinctions (comments)
		Libya, Egypt, Tunisia 14.2.41 – 12.5.43	Yugoslavia, Greece, Albania 6.4.41 – 4.10.44	
45 M.P. ( <i>Feldgendarmerie</i> ) Troops	Orange	33–999 divisional series	46–887 divisional series	Sleeve-badge & cuff- title
4 Mtn M.P. ( <i>Feldgendarmerie</i> ) Troops	Orange	–	54, 91, 94–5	<i>Edelweiss</i> & MP badges. Mtn cap
<b>Security Troops – (<i>Sicherungstruppen</i>)</b>				
1 Army Rear-Area Commander ( <i>Korück</i> )	White	–	560	
28 Sub-district Comds ( <i>Feldkommandantur</i> )	White	–	538–1042 series	<i>Kommandantur</i> gorget
2 Territorial Rifle ( <i>Landesschützen</i> ) Regts	White	–	81, 86	
24 Territorial Rifle ( <i>Landesschützen</i> ) Bns	White	–	L / 257–977 series	
1 Security ( <i>Sicherung</i> ) Regt	White	–	S / 86	
18 Security ( <i>Sicherung</i> ) Bns	White	S / 766	S / 265–1025 series	
5 Transit POW Camps ( <i>Dulag</i> )	White	–	KG / 160, 183, 185, 191, 202	
<b>Foreign Troops – (excluding Croatian Legion Divisions)</b>				
1 Cossack ( <i>Kosak</i> ) Cavalry Division Staff	Golden-yellow	–	1	Cossack/German unif. armbadge
6 Cossack ( <i>Kosak-Reiter</i> ) Cavalry Regts	Golden-yellow	–	– (1, 5 Don, 2 Sibir, 3, 4 Kuban, 6 Terek)	Cossack/German unif. armbadge
1 Cossack Artillery ( <i>Kosak-Artillerie</i> ) Regt	Bright red		55	Cossack/German unif. armbadge
5 White Russian ( <i>Russkiy Korpus</i> ) Regts	White	–	1–5	
1 Arab Special Unit ( <i>Sonderverband</i> )	Various	(III) 287	–	Turban, Free Arabia armbadge
1 Arab Infantry ( <i>Infanterie</i> ) Bn	White	–	845	Free Arabia armbadge
4 Arab Infantry ( <i>KODAT</i> ) Bns	White	(Algerien, Marokko, Tunisiens)	–	French uniforms. German armband
1 Armenian Field ( <i>Armen. Feld</i> ) Bn	White	–	(I)125	Armenian Legion armbadge
<b>Army Officials (<i>Heeresbeamten</i>) – dark green underlay (except Chaplains and Special Officers) Special rank insignia</b>				
45 Field Post ( <i>Feldpost</i> ) Offices	Lemon-yellow	Fp (33–999 divisional series)	Fp (4–887 divisional series)	
4 Mtn Field Post ( <i>Feldpost</i> ) Offices	Lemon-yellow	–	Fp (54, 91, 94–5)	<i>Edelweiss</i> badges. Mountain cap
7 Field Sec Pol ( <i>Geheime Feldpolizei</i> ) Grps	Light blue	GFP (741)	GFP (9, 171, 510, 611, 621, 640)	

Badges such as the Fb (Fortress Construction Senior NCO), Fp (Fortress Engineer Senior NCO), Rs (Regimental Saddler), Ts (Troop Saddler Candidate), V (Administrative NCO) and Zg (Ordnance Senior NCO) were obsolete in September 1939. Two new trades, Gas Precautions and Quartermaster NCOs, were established during the war.

The supply of suitable specialists could not meet wartime demand, and after 1940 it was often only specialists with the more thorough

peacetime qualification who wore the edging. Those who had passed a shorter wartime course, often designated as '*im... Dienst*' (in the... service), wore the badge without the edging.

Three types of badges produced after 1943 – the motor and tank mechanics, armoured signals mechanic and signals mechanic – showed a change in emphasis, as they were not restricted to NCOs and did not carry the same career pattern or prestige. They are therefore perhaps more comparable to the M1920 signals personnel, M1930 helmsman, M1936 artillery gun-aimer, M1937 smoke troop gun-aimer and M1941 mountain guide badges.

### Medals and Awards

On 28 September 1941 the German Cross in Gold was instituted as an intermediate award between the Iron Cross 1st Class and the Knight's Cross. It comprised a gold wreathed black swastika in a grey aluminium star worn on the right breast-pocket.

Before October 1944 Hitler instituted three further grades of Knight's Cross to reward repeated bravery – on 3 June 1940 the Knight's Cross with oak leaves, on 21 June 1941 with oak leaves and swords and on 15 July 1941 with oak leaves and swords and diamonds. This last award had only 27 recipients, including *Generalfeldmarschall* Rommel. In early 1942 the Italian High Command awarded Africa Corps personnel the Italo-German Campaign medal, a bronze (later silver plated) circular medal with a black, white, red and green ribbon. It was removed on 29 March 1944, following the Italian Armistice.

On 16 October 1942 the Crete commemorative cuff-title was awarded to Army personnel, principally in the 5th Mountain Division and 141st Mountain Regiment in the Battle of Crete 20–27 May 1941. The white cloth title, worn on the left cuff, had 'KRETA' flanked by flowers and an edging, all in yellow cotton embroidery.



**Yugoslavia, summer 1944.** An *Obergefreiter* war correspondent in summer field uniform with the M1940 tropical peaked field cap with the branch colour chevron removed and a M1940 tropical field tunic with a war correspondent's cuff-title, possibly indicating membership of the Wehrmacht War Correspondent Battalion. Note the tank battle badge. (ECPA)



**Serbia, October 1944.** Four exhausted soldiers catch a few moments' sleep in their Adler Type 3Gd Kubelwagen jeep. All wear M1940 greatcoats. Note the Wehrmacht eagle on the helmet (ordered removed 28 August 1943) and the bayonet at arm's reach. (Private Collection)

# THE PLATES

## A: ARRIVAL IN AFRICA, FEBRUARY-APRIL

1941

**A1: Generalmajor, 5. leichte Division, tropical service uniform, Tripoli, Tripolitania, March 1941** This deputy divisional commander wears a privately purchased M1940 early issue greenish-brown tropical field tunic with continental M1935 shoulder-boards and M1927 collar-patches but also a M1935 gold bullion breast-eagle instead of the standard M1940 bluish-grey thread version. He wears the M1940 pith helmet, M1940 tropical breeches with general-officers' stripes, the M1940 1st pattern tropical high-boots, a Walther PPK pistol and, unofficially, a general-officer's continental brown belt. He has the Iron Cross 1st and 2nd Class and the Knight's Cross and Pour le Mérite, the highest First World War decoration.

**A2: Hauptmann, Panzerregiment 8, tropical field uniform, Agedabia, Cyrenaica, April 1941** This 15 Panzer Division battalion commander wears the M1940 tropical field tunic with unofficial continental M1940 black field cap, leather belt, M1935 continental collar-patches and breast-eagle and Panzer lapel skulls and 10x50 Zeiss binoculars. The hard-shell P38 pistol holster, Zeiss-Umbral sun-goggles, M1940 tropical breeches and M1940 1st pattern tropical boots are standard. He wears the Iron Cross 1st and 2nd Class and the silver tank battle badge.

**A3: Obergefreiter, Kradschützenbataillon 15, tropical field uniform, Tobruk, Cyrenaica, April 1941** On 25 September 1939 motorcycle battalions officially adopted a 'K' branch symbol and grass-green branch colour, but some retained pink, golden-yellow or white. These battalions mostly ignored the 28 October 1941 change to copper-brown without the 'K' and in 1941-42 reorganised as armoured reconnaissance companies. This dispatch rider, giving the traditional German Army salute, wears the M1940 motorcyclists' greatcoat with NCO Candidates' insignia on M1940 shoulder-straps manufactured without the branch symbol, and M1936 continental chevrons, M1940 tropical field cap with sun-goggles and continental M1935 dispatch-case, and he carries M1940 tropical gauntlets and Karabiner 98k rifle.

## B: CYRENAICA AND WESTERN EGYPT, MAY-NOVEMBER 1941

**B1: Oberschütze, Maschinengewehrbataillon 2, tropical field uniform, Tobruk, Cyrenaica, May 1941** 5th Mobile Division MG battalions wore light-green branch colour instead of white. This senior private wears the M1940 pith helmet and M1940 tropical field tunic with standard collar-patches, M1940 1st pattern tropical boots, brown leather ammunition pouches instead of black, M1940 other ranks' tropical belt and rifleman's field equipment, the tropical version of the branch colour signaller's arm-badge and the black wound-badge (1-2 wounds). He carries a Karabiner 98k with canvas breech and sight cover, and a M1924 stick-grenade.

**B2: Schütze, Panzerjägerabteilung 33, tropical field uniform, Halfaya Pass, Egypt, May 1941** This 15th Panzer Division antitank crewman wears a M1940 tan variant tropical field tunic, 1st pattern tropical boots and the M1935 helmet, which in late 1941 replaced the pith helmet with

front-line units. He wears rifleman's field equipment, also worn by line and mechanised infantry, with two water-bottles and the gas-cape unofficially strapped to his gas-mask canister. In action AT crews left their equipment in the truck or half-track.

**B3: Unteroffizier, Pionierbataillon (mot.) 900, tropical field uniform, Fort Capuzzo, Cyrenaica, November 1941** This assault engineer section leader in 90th Light Africa Division wears the M1940 tropical field tunic with NCO tropical collar-braid, Engineers' (later redesignated General) Assault Badge, the unofficial 1st pattern Africa Corps cuff-title and M1940 2nd pattern high-boots. He has canvas bags for engineer equipment and grenades, an entrenching tool and bayonet, and an MP40 submachine gun with ammunition pouches.

## C: EGYPTIAN FRONTIER BATTLES, NOVEMBER 1941-OCTOBER 1942

**C1: Leutnant, Aufklärungsabteilung (mot.) 33, tropical field uniform, Gambut, Cyrenaica, November 1941** This 15th Panzer Division Motorised Reconnaissance Battalion platoon or company commander wears standard shirt-sleeve order, with M1940 shirt, shorts, and 1st pattern tropical ankle-boots, and the unpopular officers' tropical belt with P38 pistol. The Reconnaissance branch symbol appears on his shoulder-boards and the battalion's traditional 'dragoon eagle' badge on his cap. He carries standard 6x30 binoculars painted sand camouflage.

**C2: Hauptfeldwebel, Panzerregiment 5, tropical field uniform, Tobruk, Cyrenaica, May 1942** This Stabsfeldwebel acting as company sergeant major with 21st Panzer Division wears the M1940 tropical field tunic with tropical cuff appointment braids, unofficial Panzer skull lapel badges, the silver tank battle badge and the Iron Cross 2nd Class button-ribbon. He has threaded draw-strings in his M1940 tropical trousers to create a blouse effect over the 1st pattern tropical ankle-boots. He wears an issue Dutch pith helmet and carries a M1940 peakless tropical field cap and P08 hard-shell holster.

**C3: Gefreiter, leichtes Infanteriegeschützregiment 361, tropical field uniform, Bir Hacheim, Cyrenaica, May 1942** Light infantry regiments wore the light-green branch colour of rifles and mountain infantry. This first gunner with 90th Light Africa Division, fighting Free French forces at Bir Hacheim, wears the M1940 tropical greatcoat with M1940 other ranks' tropical belt, P38 hard-shell holster and spares pouch and carries an MP40 light machine gun.

## D: BATTLE OF EL ALAMEIN, OCTOBER 1942

**D1: Generalfeldmarschall Erwin Rommel, Deutsch-italienische Panzerarmee, tropical undress uniform, El Alamein** Rommel has ignored dress regulations and wears a privately purchased M1940 tropical field tunic and M1941 Generalfeldmarschall shoulder-boards with superseded M1927 general-officers' collar-patches and a continental M1935 breast-eagle. He wears a M1935 continental service cap and captured British sun-goggles, continental high-boots and, around his neck, the Knight's Cross with swords and diamonds and the prized Pour le Mérite.

**D2: Unteroffizier, Panzergrenadierregiment 115, tropical field uniform, Kidney Ridge, Tel el Aqqaqir** This section leader with 15th Panzer Division wears a M1940 tropical field tunic. He has M1940 tropical trousers, 2nd pattern tropical



**Germany, 1940.** The elegant cadet, an *Unteroffizier* (OA) of the 83rd Infantry Regiment who, judging by his decorations – Iron Class 1st and 2nd Class, infantry assault badge and silver wound-badge – is an experienced NCO recommended for officer-training, is studying at a *Waffenschule*. He wears a M1935 field tunic with private refinements – a sharper officer-style pointed collar and stiffened shoulder-straps with his regimental number in senior NCOs' white aluminium unit numerals instead of white chain-stitch – a common affectation among officer candidates. (ECPA)

ankle-boots, a field-made hessian helmet cover, a map-case, a civilian scarf against sandstorms, and – as he awaits issue of a section leader's submachine gun – standard rifleman's equipment and Karabiner 98k rifle.

**D3: Oberkanonier, Artillerieregiment 155, tropical field uniform, Kidney Ridge, Tel el Aqqaqir** As he carries a shell in a wicker basket to his 15cm SFH18 medium field gun, this crewman in 21st Panzer Division wears his unbuttoned M1940 tropical tunic, with the Africa Corps title (rarely seen in action), without his shirt or tie in the intense desert heat. He has a M1940 tropical peaked field cap, trousers, 1st pattern tropical ankle-boots.

#### **E: TUNISIAN CAMPAIGN, JANUARY–MAY 1943**

**E1: Waffenoberfeldwebel, Panzergrenadierregiment 200, tropical field uniform, Kasserine Pass, February 1943** This armourer NCO at Regimental HQ, 200th Mechanised Regiment, 90th Africa Division, wears the tropical version of his trade badge, the Africa Corps cuff title and bronze

Infantry Assault Badge, instituted on 1 June 1940 for motorised infantry, on the M1942 tropical field tunic. He has M1940 shirt and sweater, M1940 tropical trousers, 2nd pattern tropical ankle-boots and the unpopular M1940 brown webbing anklets, which from 23 February 1941 were issued to field units. He has roughly sand-camouflaged his helmet and carries a P38 pistol.

**E2: Feldwebel, Gebirgsjägerregiment 756, tropical field uniform, Longstop Hill, February 1943** This member of 334th Infantry Division wears the M1942 tropical field tunic omitting, as was not uncommon, the tropical NCO collar braid. As a mountain infantryman he has the Edelweiss cap-badge on the M1940 tropical peaked cap (with the branch colour chevron removed since 8 September 1942), the Edelweiss arm badge and mountain puttees and climbing boots. As a platoon leader he carries an MP40 submachine gun and M1938/40 olive-green or tan canvas ammunition pouches.

**E3: Schütze, Afrika-Schützenregiment 961, tropical field uniform, Fondouk, March 1943** Officers, NCOs and Men on the cadre of the 999th Africa Division wore normal insignia with light-green branch colour, but a disciplinary soldier (*Bewährungsschütze*) wore no insignia. This soldier has the M1942 tropical field tunic with breast-eagle, collar-patches and shoulder-straps removed, M1940 turtle-neck sweater, tropical breeches, M1935 helmet painted olive-green, plain tropical peaked cap, other ranks' tropical belt with a plain circle buckle-badge and 3rd pattern tropical high-boots. He carries standard riflemen's equipment and a Karabiner 98k rifle.

#### **F: INVASION OF YUGOSLAVIA AND GREECE, APRIL–MAY 1941**

**F1: Feldwebel, Panzerregiment 33, field uniform, Niš, Yugoslavia, April 1941** This tank crewman with 9th Panzer Division, XXXX Panzer Corps, wears regulation field uniform, consisting of the M1934 special tank crew uniform modified in 1936 with three lapel button-holes, with the Iron Cross 1st Class medal and 2nd Class ribbon and silver battle badge. He has the M1940 other ranks' black peakless field cap, goggles and a P08 pistol in a hard-shell holster.

**F2: Obergefreiter, Infanterieregiment 330, field uniform, Zagreb, Yugoslavia, April 1941** This member of 183rd Infantry Division wears a M1940 *feldgrau* field tunic, retaining M1935 rounded bluish dark-green shoulder-straps with NCO candidate shoulder-loops and M1936 rank chevrons, with M1940 *feldgrau* trousers. He wears a silver infantry assault badge and a black wound badge (1-2 wounds), and his helmet has, since 21 March 1940, omitted the national shield on the right side. As a deputy section leader he wears standard rifleman's equipment and he carries a Karabiner 98k rifle and a M1924 stick-grenade.

**F3: Gefreiter, Gebirgsjägerregiment 100, field uniform, Maleme Airfield, Crete, 21 May 1941** This second gunner is rushing ammunition to the first gunner during 5th Mountain Division's desperate battle for Maleme Airfield. He wears an M1935 field tunic with the Edelweiss arm-badge and M1936 rank chevrons, mountain issue M1939 *feldgrau* mountain-trousers, ankle-puttees and mountain-boots, and his helmet shows the *Wehrmacht* eagle on the left side (abolished 28 August 1943). He wears second gunner's field equipment and carries a P08 Luger pistol.

## G: OCCUPATION OF YUGOSLAVIA, APRIL

1941–OCTOBER 1944

**G1: Schütze, Landesschützenbataillon 562, field uniform, Belgrade, Serbia, January 1942** This second-line infantryman, too old or too unfit for front-line combat, is guarding part of the Vienna-Salonika railway. He wears the M1934 other ranks' 2nd pattern field cap with M1940 mouse-grey insignia, the M1940 greatcoat, with *feldgrau* collar and shoulder-straps, and standard rifleman's black leather field equipment. He carries the 1934 early war model of the Karabiner 98k rifle.

**G2: Oberstleutnant, Grenadierregiment 370 (kroatisches), field uniform, Gorazde, Eastern Bosnia, May 1943** This battalion commander, fighting in Operation Schwarz against Yugoslav Partisans, wears the M1935 officers' field tunic with M1935 officers' field quality breast-eagle, shoulder-boards and collar-patches. He has the Iron Cross 1st Class medal and 2nd Class button-ribbon, the white aluminium infantry assault badge and, as German cadre, has folded over the 'HRVATSKA' title of the Croatian arm-badge. His M1942 helmet shows the Croatian shield on the left side, and he carries standard 6x30 binoculars with a protective lid and a P38 hard-shell holster.

**G3: Starshiy Prikasni, Don-Kossak Reiterregiment 1, summer field uniform, Petrinja, Croatia, May 1944** From 18 March 1944 1st Cossack Division adopted German uniforms with dark-blue or *feldgrau* breeches and spurless riding-boots. Don Cossacks – high black fur cap, thick red trouser stripes, blue-red left (5th Regt) right (1st Regt) arm badge; Siberian – high white cap, thick yellow stripes, blue-yellow right arm badge; Kuban – low black cap, thin red stripes, black-red left (3rd Regt) right (4th Regt) arm badge; Terek – low black cap, dark-blue edged black stripes, black-blue left arm badge. This *Obergefreiter* equivalent, with the 1st Class Eastern People's medal, retains rank insignia introduced on 29 May 1943 on the M1943 tropical field tunic and wears a M1935 service cap eagle and M1940 machine-woven cockade (officers and German cadre wore M1935 service-cap insignia). He carries a Cossack whip and sword and M1942 Karabiner 98k.

## H: OCCUPATION OF GREECE AND ALBANIA, APRIL 1941–NOVEMBER 1944

**H1: Unterarzt, Sanitätskompanie 1/104, summer field uniform, Agrinion, Greece, October 1943** Probationary and field probationary 2nd lieutenants wore officers' uniform and insignia with Oberfeldwebel rank insignia. This Unterarzt in 104th Rifle Division wears the M1942 rifle cap and arm-badges, M1942 tropical tunic, officers' cap piping and bright aluminium eagle and cockade on a T-shaped backing on the privately-made tropical version of the 1943 peaked field cap. He also has (unofficially) officers' M1935 continental collar-patches, breast-eagle and brown leather belt stained black with P38 hard-shell holster. He wears *Luftwaffe* tropical trousers with 2nd pattern tropical ankle-boots, a red-cross arm-band and white aluminium aesculapius staff shoulder-strap symbol, and carries a M1941 tropical bread-bag.



An armourer sergeant (*Waffenfeldwebel*) at Battalion HQ examines a Walther 27mm long-barrel flare pistol. He wears the M1943 standard peaked field cap, the M1935 field tunic with Iron Cross 2nd Class button-ribbon and, as a war-trained armourer, his crossed-rifles trade-badge without an edging. (Brian Davis Collection)

**H2: Gefreiter, Grenadierregiment 65, summer field uniform, Kos, Greece, October 1943** This section-member in 22nd Airlanding Division, which captured Sevastopol in June 1942, wears the M1943 tropical field tunic with the Crimea arm-shield with M1940 tropical trousers and anklets. He has rifleman's field equipment with the 1941 model Karabiner 98k rifle, M1924 stick-grenades and M1939 egg grenades.

**H3: Obergefreiter, Grenadierregiment 522, field uniform, Tirana, Albania, March 1944** This First Gunner in the 297th Infantry Division wears the M1943 six-buttoned field tunic with M1940 collar-patches and rank-chevron and the M1943 standard field cap (introduced on 11 June 1943) with a M1942 mouse-grey eagle and cockade on a T-shaped *feldgrau* patch. He has standard field equipment, with a P38 soft-shell holster (introduced late 1943), and carries a MG42 light machine gun.

## Notes sur les planches en couleur

**A1** Generalmajor, 5. leichte Division, Uniforme tropical, Tripoli, Tripolitania, mars 1941. Il porte la Croix de Fer 1<sup>e</sup> et 2<sup>e</sup> classe et la Croix de Chevalier ainsi que l'Ordre du Mérite, la plus prestigieuse décoration de la Première guerre mondiale. **A2** Hauptmann, Panzerregiment 8, Uniforme tropical, Agedabia, Cyrenaïque, avril 1941. Il porte la Croix de Fer 1<sup>e</sup> et 2<sup>e</sup> classe et le badge blanc en aluminium dénotant la participation aux combats blindés. **A3** Obergefreiter, Kradschützenbataillon 15, Uniforme tropical, Tobrouk, Cyrenaïque, avril 1941. Le 25 septembre 1939, les bataillons à moto adoptèrent officiellement un symbole de branche 'K' et un étendard de branche vert pré, mais certains conservèrent le rose, le jaune d'or ou le blanc.

**B1** Oberschütze, Maschinengewehrbataillon 2, Uniforme tropical, Tobrouk, Cyrénaique, mai 1941. Les bataillons MG de la 5e Division Mobile portaient du vert clair au lieu du blanc comme couleur de branche. Il porte une Karabiner 98k avec un couvre-culasse et couvreviseur en toile, ainsi qu'une grenade bâton M1924. **B2** Schütze, PanzerJägerabteilung 33, Uniforme tropical, Col d'Halfaya, Egypte, mai 1941. Il porte le matériel de campagne d'un fusilier. Pour l'action, les équipages AT laissaient leur matériel dans le camion ou la camionnette. **B3** Unteroffizier, Pionierbataillon (mot.) 900, Uniforme tropical, Fort Capuzzo, Cyrénaique, novembre 1941. Il porte des sacs de toile pour le matériel du génie et des grenades, une pelle à tranchées et une baionnette ainsi qu'une mitrailleuse MP40 avec des gibernes à munitions.

**C1** Leutnant, Aufklärungsabteilung (mot.) 33, Uniforme tropical, Gambut, Cyrénaique, novembre 1941. Le symbole de reconnaissance de branche se trouve sur ses épaulettes et le badge traditionnel 'aigle-dragon' du bataillon sur sa casquette. Il porte des jumelles 6x30 standard peintes en camouflage sable. **C2** Hauptfeldwebel, Panzerregiment 5, Uniforme tropical, Tobrouk, Cyrénaique, mai 1942. Ce Stabsfeldwebel, qui remplit le rôle d'un sergent major de compagnie auprès de la 21e Division Panzer, porte la tunique tropicale M1940 avec les galons tropicaux aux manchettes, les badges officieux des Panzer (en forme de crâne) sur les revers, le badge en aluminium blanc qui dénote la participation aux combats blindés et la boutonnure de la Croix de Fer 2<sup>e</sup> classe. **C3** Gefreiter, leichtes Infanterieregiment 361, uniforme tropical, Bir Hacheim, Cyrénaique, mai 1942. Les régiments d'infanterie légère portaient du vert clair comme couleur de branche des fusiliers et de l'infanterie de montagne.

**D1** Generalfeldmarschall Erwin Rommel, Deutsch-italienische Panzerarmee, petite tenue tropicale, El Alamein. Il porte une tunique tropicale M1940 achetée en privée, des lunettes de soleil britanniques capturées, des bottes hautes continentales et, autour du cou, la Croix de Chevalier avec des épées et diamants et le très convoité Ordre du Mérite. **D2** Unteroffizier, Panzergrenadierregiment 115, uniforme tropical, Kidney Ridge, Tel el Aqqaqir. Ce chef de section de la 15 Division Panzer porte une tunique tropicale M1940 et le badge en bronze de l'infanterie d'assaut institué le 1<sup>er</sup> juin 1940 pour l'infanterie motorisée. **D3** Oberkanonier, Artillerieregiment 155, uniforme tropical, Kidney Ridge, Tel el Aqqaqir. Il porte sa tunique tropicale M1940 déboutonnée, avec le titre du Africa Corps (rarement vu en action).

**E1** Waffenoberfeldwebel, Panzergrenadierregiment 200, uniforme tropical, Col de Kasserine, février 1943. Il a grossièrement camouflé son casque et porte un pistolet P38.

**E2** Feldwebel, Gebirgsjägerregiment 756, uniforme tropical, Longstop Hill, février 1943. Comme c'est un soldat d'infanterie de montagne, il porte le badge Edelweiss sur sa casquette tropicale à visière M1940. C'est un chef de section et il porte une mitrailleuse MP40 et des gibernes en toile feldgrau M1938/40. **E3** Schütze, Afrika-Schützenregiment 961, uniforme tropical, Fondouk, mars 1943. Les officiers, les sous-officiers et les hommes du cadre de la 999e Division Afrique portaient des insignes normales avec du vert clair comme couleur de branche, mais un soldat disciplinaire (Bewährungsschütze) ne portait pas d'insignes.

**F1** Feldwebel, Panzerregiment 33, uniforme de combat, Niô, Yougoslavie, avril 1941. Ce membre d'un équipage de char de la 9e Division Panzer, XXXX Panzer Corps, porte l'uniforme de combat réglementaire, le calot noir M1940 des non-officiers, des lunettes de protection et un pistolet P08 dans un étui rigide. **F2** Obergefreiter, Infanterieregiment 330, uniforme de combat, terrain d'aviation de Maleme, Crète, 21 mai 1941. Il porte le matériel de combat du second artilleur et un pistolet Luger P08. **F3** Gefreiter, Gebirgsjägerregiment 100, uniforme de campagne, Terrain d'aviation de Maleme, Crète, le 21 mai 1941. Il porte le matériel de campagne d'un second canonnier et un pistolet Luger P08.

**G1** Schütze, Landesschützenbataillon 562, uniforme de combat, Belgrade, Serbie, janvier 1942. Ce soldat d'infanterie de seconde ligne porte le calot M1935 des non-officiers avec les insignes gris souris M1940, la capote M1940 avec col uni et épaulettes et le matériel de combat standard des fusiliers, en cuir noir. **G2** Obersleutnant, Grenadierregiment 370 (kroatisches), uniforme de combat, Gorazde, Bosnie, l'est, mai 1943. Son casque M1942 porte le blason croate sur la gauche et il porte des jumelles standard 3x30 dotées d'un couvercle protecteur et d'un étui rigide P38. **G3** Starshly Priskasni, Don-Kosak Reiterregiment 1, uniforme de combat d'été, Petrinja, Croatie, mai 1944. A partir du 18 mars 1944, la 1e Division Cosaque adopta l'uniforme allemand avec une culotte bleu foncé ou feldgrau et des bottes de cheval sans éperon.

**H1** Unterarzt, Sanitätskompanie 1/104, uniforme de combat d'été, Agrinon, Grèce, octobre 1943. Cet Unterarzt de la 104e Division de Fusiliers porte le calot et les badges de manches M1942, une tunique tropicale M1942, le passepoil des officiers sur sa casquette et un aigle et cocarde en aluminium sur un fond en forme de T sur sa casquette tropicale M1940.

**H2** Gefreiter, Grenadierregiment 65, uniforme de combat d'été, Kos, Grèce, octobre 1943. Il porte du matériel de combat de fusilier avec le fusil Karabiner 98k modèle 1941, des grenades-bâton M1924 et des grenades rondes M1939. **H3** Obergefreiter, Grenadierregiment 522, uniforme de combat, Tirana, Albanie, mars 1944. Il porte le matériel de combat standard, avec un étui P38 souple (introduit fin 1943) et porte une mitrailleuse MG42.

## Farbtafel

**A1** Generalmajor, 5. leichte Division, Tropenuniform, Tripolis, Tripolitanien, März 1941. Er besitzt das Eisene Kreuz 1. und 2. Klasse sowie das Ritterkreuz und den Pour le Mérite, die höchste Auszeichnung des Ersten Weltkriegs. **A2** Hauptmann, 8. Panzerregiment, Tropen-Felduniform, Agedabia, Cyrenaika, April 1941. Er trägt das Eisene Kreuz 1. und 2. Klasse und das Panzergefecht-Abzeichen aus weißem Aluminium. **A3** Obergefreiter, 15. Kradschützenbataillon, Tropen-Felduniform, Tobruk, Cyrenaika, April 1941. Seit dem 25. September 1939 nahmen Motorrad-Bataillone das Zeichen der 'K'-Truppengattung und deren grasgrüne Farbe an, doch behielten manche Einheiten die Farben Rosa, Goldgelb oder Weiß.

**B1** Oberschütze, 2. Maschinengewehrbataillon, Tropen-Felduniform, Tobruk, Cyrenaika, Mai 1941. Die MG-bataillone der 5. Motorisierten Division trugen die hellgrüne Farbe anstatt Weiß. Er trägt einen Karabiner 98k mit einer Segeltuchhülle über Verschluß und Visier sowie eine Stielhandgranate M1924. **B2** Schütze, Panzerjäger-Abteilung 33, Tropen-Felduniform, Halfaya-Paß, Ägypten, Mai 1941. Er trägt die Einsatzausrüstung eines Schützen. Im Feld ließen AT-Mannschaften ihre Ausrüstung im Lastwagen oder Räderraupenwagen. **B3** Unteroffizier, Pionierbataillon 900 (motorisiert), Tropen-Felduniform, Fort Capuzzo, Cyrenaika, November 1941. Er hat Segeltuchsäcke für technische Geräte und Granaten, ein Grabwerkzeug und Bajonetts sowie eine Maschinengewehr MP40 mit Munitionsbehältern.

**C1** Leutnant, Aufklärungsabteilung (motorisiert) 33, Tropen-Felduniform, Gambut, Cyrenaika, November 1941. Das Symbol der Aufklärungstruppe ist auf seinen Schulteraufschlägen zu sehen, und traditionelle 'Dragoneradler'-Abzeichen des bataillons auf seiner Kappe. Er trägt den üblichen 6x30-Feldstecher in sandfarbigem Tarnanstrich.

**C2** Hauptfeldwebel, Panzerregiment 5, Tropen-Felduniform, Tobruk Cyrenaika, Mai 1942. Dieser Stabsfeldwebel ist amtierender Kompanie-Hauptfeldwebel in der 21. Panzerdivision; er trägt die Tropenfeldbluse M1940 mit tropischen Manschettensternen, inoffiziellen Panzer-Totenkopfaufschlägen auf den Revers, das Tankgefetts-Abzeichen aus weißem Aluminium und das Knopflochband des Eisernen Kreuzes 2. Klasse. **C3** Gefreiter, leichtes Infanterieregiment 361, Tropen-Felduniform, Bir Hacheim, Cyrenaika, Mai 1942. Leichte Infanterieregimenter trugen die hellgrünen Truppentönen der Schützen und Gebirgsinfanterie.

**D1** Generalfeldmarschall Erwin Rommel, Deutsch-italienische Panzerarmee, Tropen-Intervisuniform, El Alamein. Er trägt eine privat erworbene Tropen-Feldbluse M1940, erbeutete britische Sonnenschutzbrille, kontinentale hohe Stiefel; um den Hals trägt er das Ritterkreuz mit Schwerten und Brillanten und den Pour le Mérite. **D2** Unteroffizier, Panzergrenadierregiment 115, Tropen-Felduniform, Kidney Ridge, Tel el Aqqaqir. Dieser Zugführer bei der 15. Panzerdivision trägt eine Tropen-Feldbluse mit dem bronzenen Infantry-Sturmabzeichen, das am 1. Juni 1940 für die motorisierte Infanterie geschaffen wurden war. **D3** Oberkanonier, Artillerieregiment 155, Tropen-Felduniform, Kidney Ridge, Tel el Aqqaqir. Er trägt die offene Tropen-Feldbluse M1940 mit dem Afrika Korps-Titel (im Feld selten gesehen).

**E1** Waffenoberfeldwebel, Panzergrenadierregiment 200, Tropen-Felduniform, Kasserine-Paß, Februar 1943. Er hat seinen Helm eine grobe Sandfarbung gegeben und trägt eine P38-Pistole. **E2** Feldwebel, Gebirgsjägerregiment 756, Tropen-Felduniform, Longstop Hill, Februar 1943. Als Gebirgsinfanterist trägt er das Edelweiß-Abzeichen an der Tropen-Schirmkappe M1940. Als Zugführer trägt er eine MP40-Maschinengewehr und feldgrau Segeltuch-Montanstaschen M1938/40. **E3** Schütze, Afrika-Schützenregiment 961, Tropen-Felduniform, Fondouk, März 1943. Offiziere, Unteroffiziere und Soldaten trugen normale Insignien in hellgrüner Truppengattungsfarbe; Bewährungsschützen trugen jedoch keine Insignien.

**F1** Feldwebel, Panzerregiment 33, Felduniform, Niô, Jugoslawien, April 1941. Dieser Panzersoldat der 9. Panzerdivision, XXXX. Panzerkorps, trägt vorschriftsmäßige Felduniform, die schwarze schirmlose Feldkappe M1940, Schutzhörner und eine P08-Pistole in einem starken Halfter. **F2** Obergefreiter, Infanterieregiment 330, Felduniform, Zagreb, Jugoslawien, April 1941. Als stellvertretender Zugführer trägt er die normale Schützenausrustung sowie einen Karabiner 98k und eine Stielhandgranate M1924. **F3** Gefreiter Gebirgsjägerregiment 100, Felduniform, Flugplatz Maleme, Kreta, 21. Mai 1941. Er trägt die Feldausrüstung eines zweiten Kanoniers und eine P08-Luger Pistole.

**G1** Schütze, Landesschützenbataillon 562, Felduniform, Belgrad, Serbien, Januar 1942. Dieser Infanterist der zweiten Linie trägt die Feldkappe M1935 mit mausgrauen Insignien M1940, den langen Mantel M1940 mit glattem Kragen und Schulterklappen sowie die normale Schützenausrustung in schwarzem Leder. **G2** Oberstleutnant, (kroatisches) Grenadierregiment 370, Felduniform, Gorazde, Ostbosnien, Mai 1943. Sein Helm M1942 zeigt links den kroatischen Schild, und er trägt den Standard-Feldstecher 6x30 mit Schutzhölzern sowie einen starken P28-Halfter. **G3** Starshly Priskasni, Donkosaken-Reiterregiment 1, Sommer-Felduniform, Petrinja, Kroatien, Mai 1944. Seit 18. März 1944 hatte die 1. Kosakendivision deutsche Uniformen angenommen, mit dunkelblauen oder feldgrauen Reithosen und Reitsätteln ohne Sporen.

**H1** Unterarzt, Sanitätskompanie 1/104, Sommer-Felduniform, Agrinon, Griechenland, Oktober 1943. Dieser Unterarzt in der 104. Schützendivision trägt die Schützenkappe M1942 und Armbindezeichen, die Tropenbluse M1942, Offizierskappe mit Litzenbesatz, hellem Aluminiumadler und Kokarde auf T-förmigem Hintergrund dieser Tropen-Schirmkappe M1940. **H2** Gefreiter, Grenadierregiment 65, Sommer-Felduniform, Kos, Griechenland, Oktober 1943. Er hat Schützen-Feldausrüstung mit dem Karabiner 98k des Jahres 1941, Stielhandgranaten M1924 und Eierhandgranaten M1939. **H3** Obergefreiter, Grenadierregiment 522, Felduniform, Tirana, Albanien, März 1944. Standard-Feldausrüstung, welche P38-Halfter (Ende 1943 eingeführt) und ein leichtes Maschinengewehr MG42.

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